TRADITIONAL FOODS IN NATIVE AMERICA

A compendium of stories from the Indigenous food sovereignty movement in American Indian and Alaska Native communities

“Food is at the center of our culture... it feeds our bodies and it feeds our spirit.”

Vanessa Cooper (Lummi)

Northwest Indian College - Traditional Plants & Food Program

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Purpose and Background

Commissioned by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Native Diabetes Wellness Program (NDWP), this report highlights the traditional foods programs in six culturally and geographically diverse American Indian/Alaska Native communities. For decades American Indian and Alaska Native communities have been reclaiming traditional foods and practices as an integral part of the global Indigenous food sovereignty movement that embraces identity and history, tribal sovereignty, traditional ways and cultural practices to address health.

For more than a decade, the CDC's NDWP has supported tribally driven efforts to promote health and help prevent type 2 diabetes in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Among many promising efforts, such as the highly acclaimed Eagle Books series and the Diabetes Education in Tribal Schools K-12 Curriculum (DETS), a particularly innovative approach to diabetes prevention has been the Traditional Foods Program. Supporting the Indigenous food sovereignty movement to reclaim traditional foods systems, NDWP also focuses on traditional physical activity and culturally based social support in tribal communities to address complex health disparities, such as diabetes, and social determinants of health.

From 2008 to 2014, the NDWP has supported 17 tribal communities through cooperative agreements that make up the Traditional Foods Program. The 17 partner grantees are representative of tribes and tribal organizations from coast to coast. Each site has taken a unique approach to restoring and sustaining a healthful and traditional food system. Throughout the course of this program, the NDWP has learned even more the great value these projects provide in addition to health promotion and diabetes prevention. The projects address critical issues such as food security, food sovereignty, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability.

Consequently, in addition to highlighting stories about the NDWP Traditional Foods Program partner grantees (see http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/projects/diabetes-wellness.htm), the NDWP wanted to learn more about traditional foods programs from across Indian Country. At first the gathered stories were to help educate the NDWP about how to continue this work. The tribal representatives who told their stories had some other ideas, though! They wanted their stories to be shared with all who could learn from them, with the hope that those who heard the stories would then share stories of their own. The six stories presented here are the first in a series of three story collections to achieve that goal.

To collect this initial compendium of interviews and stories, the NDWP partnered with the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) who in turn contracted with the author, Chelsea Wesner. Based on interviews with key persons in each community, the stories illustrate how six traditional foods programs are providing food security efforts that are tribally-supported, culturally significant, and sourced in their very own communities. The programs represented here are a diverse network of communities from harsh desert climates to fertile, coastal lands.

Traditional Foods Programs and Food Security

Traditional foods programs play a promising role in addressing food insecurity in Native American communities, further supporting type 2 diabetes prevention efforts among American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/AN). A rare disease 60 years ago, the incidence of type 2 diabetes is now higher among AI/AN adults and children than any other racial and ethnic group in the United States (CDC, 2011). Of great concern, AI/AN children, particularly those living on or near reservation and tribal lands, are more likely to experience type 2 diabetes, food insecurity, and obesity in comparison to all children in the U.S. of similar ages (Gordon & Oddo, 2012).

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes, such as food insecurity, food environment, and poverty (Gordon & Oddo, 2012; Seligman et al., 2007; Berkowitz et al., 2013; Jones-Smith et al., 2013), pose significant barriers to type 2 diabetes prevention in Native American communities. While adhering to a healthful diet is an important factor in diabetes prevention and

control for those who have diabetes, it requires the availability and affordability of healthful food.

Availability of Healthful Food

In 2008, one in four AI/AN households were food insecure, and AI/AN households with children were more than twice more likely to experience food insecurity than non-AI/AN households with children (Gordon & Oddo, 2012). Food deserts, a more serious degree of food insecurity, exist in many of the more isolated reservation and tribal lands, requiring people to travel long distances to supermarkets (Gordon & Oddo, 2012).

A study in 2012 by Bauer et al., found 40 percent of families living on the Pine Ridge Reservation food insecure. In the same study, parents reported experiencing multiple barriers to accessing healthful food. Much of the food available in the home was purchased at convenience stores on or near the reservation. A similar study in 2013 found 29 percent of children and 45 percent of adults food insecure in four AI/AN communities in the Southwest, suggesting interventions that address the affordability of healthful food and transportation to obtain fresh food are needed (Mullany et al, 2013).

Affordability of Healthful Food

Food insecurity is further compounded by poverty. In 2010, more than 24 percent of AI/AN households were below the Federal poverty line in comparison to 15 percent of all U.S. households (Gordon & Oddo, 2012).

While food insecurity is associated with type 2 diabetes and poverty (Seligman et al., 2007), it is also associated with a food environment that promotes obesity in households with children (Nackers & Appelhans, 2013). A recent study suggests changing the food environment alone is not sufficient in changing healthful food intake among lower income families (Jones-Smith et al, 2013). Food environment in this study was the density of healthful and unhealthful food vendors in a specific area (Jones-Smith et al, 2013). While unhealthful food environments in this study were associated with a higher prevalence of obesity, lower income participants living in healthful food environments were more at risk for obesity. Researchers suggest this inverse relationship might be explained by purchasing power. Families with limited income tend to purchase more processed and unhealthful foods in a large grocery store because they are often more affordable per calorie than fresh, whole foods (Mullany et al, 2013; Bauer et al, 2012; Gordon & Oddo, 2012; Jones-Smith et al, 2013). Thus, interventions that address food insecurity should also consider the affordability of healthful food in the community.

METHODS

The methods used in this report included a set of 5 open – ended questions asked of each interviewee. Each question and the answer make up the story for each community. The questions were most often answered in writing, providing the interviewee time to think about what she or he would like to say. We believe this method allowed for the rich and thoughtful narrative that each of these storytellers provides.

Identified by the author, NIHB, and NDWP as having innovative approaches and promising practices, a total of nine traditional foods programs were invited to participate. Of those invited, six programs agreed.

Key findings and shared themes were identified and are listed below. Each of these findings and shared themes can be found in all or some of the stories.

The interviews with representatives of the six traditional foods programs follow the list of key findings and shared themes. Included are traditional food stories from:

- Mohegan Foodways (Mohegan Tribe, Connecticut)
- Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative (Muscogee 'Creek' Nation, Oklahoma)
- Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin)
- Seven Arrows Garden (Pueblo of Laguna, New Mexico)
- Suquamish Community Health Program

(Suquamish Tribe, Washington)
- Traditional Plants and Foods Program (Northwest Indian College, Washington)

Representatives from each community also shared traditional foods recipes, contact information, and additional resources for tribal communities interested in developing their own traditional foods programs.

All programs featured in this report operate independently from NDWP. Interviews were conducted between May and July of 2013, and participation was voluntary.

Key Findings and Shared Themes

The traditional foods programs featured in this report share many common goals, with particular focus on supporting local policies and health practices, the preservation of stories and traditional methods of gathering and preparing food, and engaging community members. Some of the most commonly shared themes among the programs include the following:

- Educating community members about indigenous food systems and raising awareness of the
- importance of restoring traditional methods.
- Using organic growing methods to preserve the environment and to increase access to healthier foods.
- Striving to build community engagement, support, and leadership for program sustainability.
- Increasing the availability of healthful, local foods in schools (farm to school policies).
- Establishing a local food economy through social enterprises, farmers' markets or other activities.
- Increasing access to traditional and healthful foods for tribal members.
- Fostering intergenerational knowledge through engaging tribal elders in the local food system.
- Increasing physical activity through activities such as gathering, gardening, harvesting, hunting,
- preserving, and preparing traditional foods.
- Involving youth in program activities for cultural preservation, community engagement, leadership development, and disease prevention/health promotion.

Other critical themes included:

- Understanding the importance of plant diversity, and educating tribal members about seeds in relation to genetic diversity and local food systems.
- Developing seed saving projects and offering seed saving education.
- Learning about and implementing dry agriculture techniques in harsh desert climates.
- Understanding how genetically-modified seeds, through cross pollination, threaten the integrity of heirloom seeds.
- Practicing water conservation through water harvesting and grey water irrigation systems.
- Improving soil quality and composting, particularly in harsh desert climates.
- Strategic planning for sustainability.
- Completing a community food assessment to guide program goals and objectives.
- Increasing food security in the local tribal community.
- Increasing access to healthful and traditional foods in tribal elder programs.
- Strengthening cultural identity and knowledge sharing among tribal members.

Key areas of interest for future work and sustainability include the following (primarily based on oral interviews with program staff):

- Increasing education and outreach (for both program staff and community-based classes).
- Training series on establishing a sustainable food economy (social enterprises, farmers' markets, cafes, local markets).
- Strategic planning and grant proposal trainings to diversify funding and create sustainable programs.

Featured Interviews

The following section includes interviews with six traditional foods programs from the coastal communities of the Pacific Northwest to a New England tribe near the Atlantic Ocean.

Quote from Gladys Tantaquidgeon, Mohegan Medicine Woman, 1899-2005.
Photo courtesy of Susan Meehan, Sutáyi Muks.

MOHEGAN FOODWAYS

Wiyámo Mohiksinak, Healthy Mohegans
Mohegan Tribe
Connecticut

Mohegan Foodways is a program with the Mohegan Tribe. The Mohegan Tribe is located in southeastern Connecticut about 10 miles north of the Long Island Sound. With about 1,700 tribal members, the tribe's reservation covers 700 acres.

The following is an interview with Susan Meehan (Mohegan) from April 2013. Susan is the Traditions & Outreach Specialist with the Mohegan Tribe.

Q: What were the primary or original goals for starting the Mohegan Foodways program? Did they involve food sovereignty, identity, cultural preservation, improving health, or another issue?

A: "In short, yes! All of the concepts in the list above are important considerations in regard to any successful tribal program. The connectedness of tribal life impacts all aspects of our life: our sovereignty, our cultural identity, our language, and all aspects of our well-being including spiritual, physical, emotional and mental health. In regard to food sovereignty, original seeds are disappearing annually at an alarming rate. According to the mission statement of the Seed Savers Exchange, "Agriculture and seeds provide the basis upon which our lives depend. We must protect this foundation as a safe and genetically stable source for future generations (www.seedsavers.org)." In reference to Seed Savers Exchange findings, Canadian researcher, Brewster Kneen, suggests open-pollinated, non-genetically modified seed strains are disappearing from the world at about the rate of 1%-2% per year. Further, Kneen states, "Seed Saver found that 943 open-pollinated varieties available in 1984 were no longer available from seed companies in 1987, and between 1987 and 1991, 1263 more varieties of open-pollinated vegetable seed (23.8% of the catalogues' varieties) were dropped from the seed company catalogues. In addition, of the 5,797 vegetable varieties appearing in commercial seed catalogues, 3002 are offered by only one company, with another 883 offered by only two companies. In other words, unless strenuous efforts are made to save these seeds, there could be a tremendous loss of genetic

diversity in just this area of vegetable seeds in the next few years (Kneen 1995)."[1]

Many Americans, including many Mohegans, do not realize the big picture of genetically modified seed and of hybrid plants; therefore, sharing a community garden of heirloom non-hybrid, non-modified vegetables is initially only sharing a community garden that produces great-tasting foods. From this seed which we plant today with care and consideration, the larger picture grows deep-seated roots and shapes the bigger picture in the mindset of our future generations. Some of this generation may not ever realize what is at risk with lack of plant diversity and sterile[2] hybrids, but this generation can be motivated to preserve the seed for the next generation without ever having to understand the importance of such efforts. They may or may not realize the crisis, but still, they can help pave the path with smooth river stones for the future.

In simple terms, we encompass this larger message all along the way showing our people a hybrid gourd, one that looked pretty with yellow and green interesting bumps. The dried gourd is the same color as the pure strain but it feels thin-skinned and weak, and even more concerning, the music is missing. When you shake the dried hybrid, the music is silent – there is no soft rattle sound because the hybrid is without seed - an empty, thin shell of what once was.

A primary goal in establishing Wiyámo Mohiksinak is to plant the seeds for a sustainable program that will develop with Mohegan encompassing future generations. Directly due to Meehan's studies at Goucher College for her Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability (MACS, Class of 2013), Wiyámo Mohiksinak is a sustainable program considering all facets of the pillars of sustainability as defined by the 2002 Melbourne Principles (Melbourne Principles, UNEP, 2002). Wiyámo Mohiksinak is steeped in Mohegan culture with minimal economic need in companion, organic garden beds that result in environmental sustainability and responsibility. Awáhkuwôk Tahykihcáwôk is a socially equitable community project for all Mohegan community.

While we have maintained a version of a community garden over the years, the difference today is stability of location and interaction of our people at the new (2010) Mohegan Community and Government Center. As we embark on our seasonal Awáhkuwôk Tahykihcáwok (the Community Garden) at Mohegan Community and Government Center, Mohegan's Cultural and Community Programs together with the community will nurture and foster our garden. Every week our summer camp and our cultural docents (a mentoring and summer internship program designed by Mohegan's Human Resources and by Sandra Pineault, Manager, Mohegan Community and Cultural Programs) have a workshop with Meehan centered around Wiyamo Mohiksinak and the community garden, Awáhkuwôk Tahykihcáwôk. Some hands-on activities include harvesting and sharing fresh vegetables and making herbal teas. More academia related topics include discussion comparing indigenous foods and non-indigenous foods and the direct impact of foods on our health and well-being. In the tradition of our ancestors, we will annually save the best of our heirloom seeds to ensure a strong foundational root system upon which Mohegan can build, develop, and sustain our health, our ideals, our culture and our people."

Q: What is your favorite thing about being involved in a local food system?

A: "Helping to form the foundation for healthier living for future generations of Mohegan citizens and our community is the most exciting part of being involved in the local food system. Though we are starting with a simple garden and our stories, the big-picture, encompassing approach will integrate the Wiyámo Mohiksinak programming across many departments within Mohegan government. Mohegan's Cultural & Community Programs is working with Monica Farina RN, MS, CDE from Mohegan Health Support Services under the Special Diabetes Program for Indians Grant

1 *Kneen, Brewster. (1995). From Land to Mouth, Understanding the Food System. Toronto, Ontario: NC Press Limited, 1995.*

2 *Unlike hybrid animals (e.g. mules) that are unable to reproduce, hybrid plants are not completely sterile. However, hybrid plants do not breed true, and seedless varieties can only reproduce vegetatively, if at all.*

to facilitate a Mohegan Community garden to foster integration of nutritional concepts, hands-on activities, cultural concepts and oral traditions about the foods we choose to eat. Mohegan Government and Community Center houses Cultural and Community Programs under the management of Sandy Pineault; Mohegan Recreation Department, Mohegan Tribal Health Support Services and Tribal Family Services and all of Mohegan government's offices. With our cultural guidance stemming from the Council of Elders and our Medicine Woman Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel (Zobel also serves Mohegan in the capacity of Executive Director of Cultural & Community Programs and Tribal Historian), programming within Wiyámo Mohiksinak can establish roots that can grow to sustain the test of time for future generations. Another important thing to mention is that personally, I have been impacted by the Tribe's initiatives to improve the health of our citizens. I have recently joined the Tribe's Healthy Heart initiative and participated in the diabetes prevention and education programs losing over 8% of my total body weight and walking several miles a week, stretching and practicing our Tribal dances alongside our tribal youth. This is the first year I have ever been able to win the "Feather Challenge!" The Feather Challenge is a social dance or a game played by many North American tribes. A clean turkey or goose feather is placed on the ground – grass gives the best advantage to the player. There is a specific song that accompanies the Feather Challenge. As the song starts, the player dances his/her best around the feather. When the rhythm of the song changes to a very fast energetic beat, the player must pick up the feather. Only the soles of the player's feet may touch the ground, and the player may use only her mouth to pick up the feather, so the Feather Challenge is a game of stretching, balance and agility. We often joke that is also a game in which the player must learn when to surrender – or they may end up with their face planted in Mother Earth. It is important to me to live what I am trying to share with our community, so I have been making better food and activity choices this year. In summary to this question, my favorite thing about being involved in Mohegan Foodways is the potential to have great positive impact upon the overall health of future Mohegan generations."

Elder Accomac Sharon Maynard painting ceremonial symbols on the faces of Mohegan youth. Photo courtesy of Susan Meehan.

Q: What traditional Mohegan foods are found in the Mohegan Foodways program? Is there a particular approach you take when restoring traditional foods and methods?

A: "Whether a tradition is a food or music or a dance, the first move in a game-plan to restore a tradition including a traditional food is to ascertain what past-practice encompasses. What is the tradition? What are the cultural markers surrounding this traditional food? Mohegan's tribal community is all about the past and its immediate, circular impact upon the present and the future. At Mohegan, the first places to start to determine past practice are two-fold: ask the "old ladies" and consult Mohegan Archives. Though somewhat cumbersome, Mohegan Library and Archives is a treasure chest of 3-dimensional and in-print past Mohegan practice that was, until recently, maintained by a faithful Mohegan elder, Faith Damon-Davison. Davison once referred to me as "like me," (She was saying I reminded her of a younger "Faith.") a "keeper," meaning someone who would hold onto something important until the time came to let it out from under the bed. This was a great compliment from Davison! In Mohegan Archives, anything that

mentioned Mohegan in any way was archived into a file: files include headings such as "corn" or "basketry" or "symbols," and within each file is everything that Davison ever encountered about that heading, along with an intelligible summary written by Davison as Mohegan Archivist. Current Mohegan Librarian and Archivist David Freeburg together with Mohegan assistant Rachel Sayet, have brought these valuable summaries into the 21st century digitally scanning the documents into a searchable database, and establishing up-to-date blogs of the happenings around the reservation. So, "Archives," if you are lucky enough to have a "keeper" in your Tribe, is the easy answer to this question.

Talking to your elders is sometimes not so easy. Elders have unique ways about them – when it is time to talk about something, it is time to talk, and this time is not necessarily right now even if your school paper is due tomorrow. Talking to your elders about such important matters as "traditions" including traditional foods may mean years of listening to a lot of things one may not think has anything to do with the topic at hand, but sometimes turns out to have everything to do with the answers you were seeking. At Mohegan, we are lucky to have our Council of Elders, an elected body of seven tribal elders who serve many functions, but amongst those functions, they offer guidance in all matters of Mohegan culture, they appoint ceremonial positions such as Medicine Person, and Fire Keeper, and they serve to protect our governing document assuring that all legislation is true to the Mohegan Constitution. Having a Council of Elders does not minimalize our many other tribal elders and their input, but turning to the Council of Elders does offer a great place to embark upon a project. After the elders, I would still strongly recommend talking to the people, as many as possible, from the children to the parents to the grandparents and aunties and uncles. If you are going to nurture a program for the people, it must ultimately start and be in the hands of the people. Building things FOR people is not nearly as valuable as building things WITH the people so they know how to succeed on their own one day. As in any group, a program's success is often determined by how much it is an idea of the people and is true to the ideals of the people. In summary, plan to spend a great deal of time listening before you even begin to plan and program – the Creator gave us two ears and only one mouth for good reason. Plant the seeds, ask the question, and then listen for a long time. Kitámôq. Listen."

Q: In what ways has the Mohegan Foodways program been a champion for improving health in your tribal community?

A: "Being a champion takes a long time and a lot of practice. I think Wiyámo Mohiksinak has the potential for champion status. Integrating our culture with our messages is integral to appealing to our community. Programs such as Wiyámo Mohiksinak will be more successful if analogous to the messages our culture, our celebrations including seasonal celebrations, our oral histories, our lesson stories and our life-trails have shown us. Food is a component in nearly every cultural marker, in every life transition across every society upon Nahkás Áhki (Mother Earth), food is life; without food, there is no life. For that reason, food is an easy integration into any program, and with any program, trying to offer healthy options and pertinent information is a good place to start. For example, start with what our people know – they watch television. A native-based movie coupled with dinner including healthy Mohegan foods was a natural result and a great success. Storytelling and sharing stories – these are human nature, at least here at Mohegan. Add yoh'kik (roasted, pounded corn meal) and a reasonable serving of vanilla ice cream – nuks (yes), Mohegans will come! Taking something that someone already enjoys, and adding healthy foods is a good sale's tactic. Offering "water" as the drink of choice at many events is also an easy option that can truly impact the health of the people. Replacing just one sugary or caffeinated drink a day with water can make a difference. In all building blocks with the large picture of Wiyámo Mohiksinak, providing information and healthy food options provides good foundation for healthy habits.

Giving our people the knowledge, skills and toolsets to make healthier choices works. Being considerate of the things that people enjoy, and coupling these activities with healthy and tasty food options helps foster the cause of healthier choices. By reasonable and realistic choices, one must realize that while Mohegan is in the

Autumn Sun Catrina Meehan waiting for Harvest Dance Celebration. Photo courtesy of Susan Mehan.

lush green hills of Connecticut, the space available that is not developed is sparse compared to the space in which our ancestors enjoyed. We cannot expect our people to harvest wild plants as we have a couple of generations of knowledge gaps missing. While this knowledge of safe to eat plants is something we can aspire to, we have misplaced this traditional knowledge in our 21st century busy lifestyles. Our reasonable expectations may include choosing a handful of fresh fruit and nuts and maybe a few dark chocolate chips instead of a candy bar, and a definite better choice is that glass of water over that soda.

Repetition and consistency are also keys to success. For example, all programs that involve our youth begin with a similar code of conduct review. This code of conduct is on posters and print outs in both child-friendly and legalese language, and it starts with, "Be nice," and "Respect." Offering water only as a drink at our programs is becoming more popular. Sometimes, these offerings include tea and coffee. Ultimately, some of this tea will come from Awáhkuwôk Tahykihcáwok, our Mohegan Community Garden from the strawberry leaves, mints and Sweet Mace of our ancestors that will grow this season in Awáhkuwôk Tahykihcáwok.

In summary to this question, being a champion is yet to come for Wiyámo Mohiksinak, Mohegan Foodways, and Awáhkuwôk Tahykihcáwok, the Community Garden, because many times champions are not recognized for a long time from when they once championed for their people. What seems like a minor decision today can mean everything tomorrow. This year, the new location of our garden at Mohegan Community and Government Center was funded by the Tribe's Diabetes Education Grant. Perhaps it will be that one seed that was saved from hegemony in our hybrid world, or perhaps it will be that one story that stood the test of time and is repeated by a grandmother to her Mohegan grandchild seven generations from now. It could be that one day that we decided to walk on the upper path and reject a violent answer, or it could be that one punch we threw to save a sister. Champions take many moons to come into the light and to recognize sometimes."

Q: What advice would you offer tribes that are interested in starting their own community food system?

A: "We started with only the classic "Three Sisters" over a decade ago up at Fort Hill. All we grew was Mohegan flint corn, beans and squash, and maybe some strawberries, tomatoes and Jerusalem artichokes. This was a good foundation. With our corn harvest we managed to use a food processor to make our traditional ground corn yoh'kik or travelling food. We have perfected this process over the years first roasting our corn kernels with a little hard-wood ash, and grinding our roasted kernels in a stone mortar with wooden pestle, sifting it for those concerned about their dental work. Yoh'kik has such a nutty, pleasant taste and my kids have used it on ice cream, in pancakes, for pancakes, in mashed potatoes, in soups, and sprinkled on just about any food. Ironically, to some this may seem like stepping backward from food processor to mortar and pestle, but in our minds we have "perfected" and relearned the value deep within the lessons of our ancestors. Today, it may not feed even a micro-world, but envision tomorrow and always keep your heart set on the prize.

Each year, someone has brought a new, old component back to the garden to share, and to plant. Sage, sweetgrass, cucumbers, more bean varieties and more squash varieties have been introduced, but care is taken not to cross-breed our heirloom seeds to create sterile hybrids. Knowledge is power, and as our early 20th century chief Harold Tantaquidgeon

said, "A smart Indian uses what is available to him," as he covered his wigwam with free surplus canvas. Our children have no idea how hard it once was to find information. Now-a-days the directions are but a click away: how to plant, harvest, save seed and prepare just about any food imaginable is available online. This is another way to pull in our 21st century dwellers – research and finding answers is a key component to learning, and children instinctively like to seek answers whether it is by talking to their grandparents or enlisting the internet.

Sometimes you think a program is working, and you think you are successfully conveying a message, and then you find that you have not adequately explained the "WHY." For example, we found that our children had no idea why Mohegan did not recognize Columbus Day as a "holiday" – wasn't the Tribal Office just opened because we (the children) have no school, so we get to go to Camp? Like most children, in their innocence who believe anything that happens must be a direct result of something to do with them (whether this thing that happened is good or bad), Mohegan children assumed we stayed open to be able to have them come to camp for a day out of school. Do not be afraid of mistakes. Mistakes are our opportunities to do better next time. Mistakes provide our direction book.

Klindest Patricia quote on wood sign. Photo courtesy of Susan Meehan.

The following year we made the message more clear with a Columbus Day re-enactment of Columbus' enslavement of the indigenous (the "Indians") on the Caribbean islands off the coast of Turtle Island. For the adults, it was very daunting to have this man with a sword given the best we had to offer, and in turn give us these large silver bracelets as he spit the best food we had to offer in our faces. For the kids it was sword-bearing pirates, chains, running, "acting," and fun, but before the end, they understood what we were trying to tell them. When they viewed the now quieting scene: the empty smoldering village with no Indians left to run, and the laughing parade of Columbus' men, after a while, they paused in their fun – there were no more Indians. They understood. Columbus was not a nice man who simply sailed the ocean blue. His arrival heralded empty villages scarred with enslavement and murder for many indigenous peoples.

Addressing with our children why this matters today is vital to connecting with our upcoming generations. World-wide, cultures are still under attack, and bullying and hatred toward people because of their differences is not the path we want to travel. Here is another connecting thread: biodiversity in people is as valuable as that in our garden. We summed the day up with a feast as it may have looked here on the eastern shorelines of Mohegan's homeland in the dawn of the 16th century. Food is always good consolation after a sad story. Learning from our mistakes or our "teachings" allows us to change to meet the ever-changing needs of our people."

Special thanks to Ms. Susan Meehan, Sutáyi Muks, of the Mohegan Tribe for sharing her time and stories. To learn more about this project, please find contact information on page 43.

Indian pumpkin plants from seeds provided by MFSI growing at the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture Farm, Poteau, Oklahoma. These pumpkins are light tan in color and are very tasty in pies, breads, and other dishes. Seeds can be toasted and eaten as well. Seeds are also saved for growing next year. Picture taken by MFSI, August 23, 2013.

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative

Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Oklahoma

The Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative (MFSI) is a well-established organization led by Darrell Fox (Mvskoke) within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma. Located in east central Oklahoma, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation covers nearly three million acres and has approximately 75,697 enrolled members.

The following is an interview with June Marshall and the MFSI staff from May 2013. June is a Community Coordinator and Program Director with MFSI.

Q: What were the primary (or original) goals for starting the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative? Did they involve food sovereignty, identity, cultural preservation, improving health, or another issue?

A: "It was at the April 13, 2005, project meeting, that the mission statement was being developed and the following was to be submitted to the Attorney General's Office to use to draft the legislation for the National Council Resolution to recognize and possibly fund the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative: The Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative will enable the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to provide for the food and health needs of its citizens now and in the future through sustainable agriculture, economic development, community involvement, cultural and educational programs. Later, the word 'citizens' was changed to read: "…enable the Mvskoke people and their neighbors…"

The three options that the MFSI had to consider was whether or not to continue as a steering committee and apply for nonprofit status under tribal law, form a board of directors and officers and apply for nonprofit status under the State of Oklahoma and then apply for 501(c) (3), or become a part of another 501(c) (3) and work under their auspices. The ad hoc committee composed of eleven Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) citizens and neighbors discussed many ideas and concepts for goals. One issue that kept surfacing was how to involve the community centers into MFSI activities and services. This was thought to be a vital link to the citizen. A huge following continued

to come to meetings to discuss the food needs of the Muscogee peoples. It dawned on the group that this was probably the first time in the long history of the Muscogee people that they were almost completely dependent on outside sources for their foods.

Goals were established at the March 30, 2005, meeting:

- Plan and develop marketing strategies connecting tribal food service provides with tribal and local food producers.
- Develop and maintain a sustainable agriculture program throughout the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.
- Implement a tribal greenhouse and other season extension systems to assure year round fresh produce.
- Implement community gardens and farmers markets programs.
- Provide garden services and products for Muscogee citizens.
- Provide educational opportunities involving nutrition, organic gardening, traditional foods, traditional non-food uses of plants (baskets, crafts, etc.) and other related topics.
- Create an intertribal marketing network.

As it turned out, the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative, Inc. received the not for profit certificate of incorporation from the State of Oklahoma December 8, 2006, and a board of directors and officers were formed, and MFSI applied for IRS 501 (c) (3) status that was granted June 18, 2007."

Q: What is your favorite thing about being involved in a local food system?

A: "MFSI favorite thing about being involved in a local food system is all the neighbors we have met and the friendships we have developed. The completed grants and the grants we are currently working on have really helped MFSI reach into the heart of our communities."

Q: What traditional Mvskoke foods are found in the MFSI? Is there a particular approach you take when restoring traditional foods and methods?

A: "The Traditional Mvskoke Foods Recovery Project is currently the only formal approach that Mvskoke

Children planting celery at the Wilson Garden. Photo courtesy of MSFI.

Food Sovereignty Initiative has for increasing production, availability of seeds, and consumption of two traditional Mvskoke tribal crops -- sofke (osafke) corn and Indian pumpkin.

Indian pumpkin belongs to the gourd family and is indigenous to the Americas; it has been cultivated by ancestors of the Mvskokvlke for over 4,000 years. Indian pumpkin is endangered in terms of accessibility, which directly stems to availability of seed, a pass-along variety, for planting. There are very few farmers that continue to grow Indian pumpkin in the Muscogee Nation today. Although there are genetically-related varieties from the Cucurbita moschata species, such as Buckskin, Kentucky Field, and Seminole Pumpkin, which is also endangered, elders know that there is a distinct difference in the texture and taste of the pumpkin meat. There is much value in revitalizing this particular variety of pumpkin in terms of its nutritional value and what it can contribute to a tribal group that has a disproportionate incidence of diet-related diseases compared to the rest of the population. Both sofke corn and Indian pumpkin originate from seed lines that began in southeastern tribal homelands and have continued as a part of Mvskoke food ways today. Sofke corn and Indian pumpkin are of significant value and represent sustenance that is revered through language, stories, beliefs, and patterns of behavior that contribute to the

MFSI cooking class. Photo couresy of MSFI.

larger value systems of the Mvskokvlke.

At the beginning of this project Stephanie B. Berryhill, project manager, who is also an applied anthropologist, believed that Mvskoke people had stopped growing sofke corn around 40 years ago. The biggest obstacles directly related to growing this corn was access to seed. Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative (MFSI), as an organization, had been mistaken regarding the extremely limited availability of this seed for planting. The very limited amount of sofke corn that was in the possession of MFSI could not be formally identified as sofke corn, although it was utilized for planting and with limited success.

The ideal situation in terms of sofke seed for planting would have been a seed donation by a Mvskoke elder and/or family members who had kept seed that had been grown in their families and had been passed down to subsequent generations. By the end of this project, Berryhill was able to identify a source for what is believed to be original sofke corn that was grown by Mvskoke people after arrival in Indian Territory (Oklahoma). This was possible through Berryhill's work interviewing elders on their knowledge of food ways as well as local family growing practices and histories.

The work was originally implemented at two projects sites in located in Okmulgee and Creek counties through grant funding from Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. It is currently being grown at the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture through its horticulture program work related to a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant, under which Berryhill works and is continuing this project.

The first objective of the original project included growing plots of two traditional crops - sofke corn and Indian pumpkin - using modern equipment and conventional plant/row spacing. The second objective included training community growers about seed saving techniques and to save seeds from each crop for free distribution to other communities and families for the 2013 growing season. The third objective included working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Food and Fitness Policy Council to engage tribal government leaders, local farmers, and tribal nutrition program providers (elderly nutrition program, child care, etc.) to incorporate support for local farmers to grow traditional crops through a procurement policy for local, sustainably produced farm products. The fourth objective included utilizing traditional knowledge of tribal elders to teach, through four cooking classes held at Wilson Indian Community Center, young women of parenting age and youth about preparation of Indian pumpkin and sofke corn dishes. The fifth objective included the collection and publication of stories about traditional

Black pot used to prepare osafke corn. Photo courtesy of MSFI.

foods in the MFSI newsletter. This was done in order to increase awareness of the cultural and nutritional significance of Indian pumpkin and sofke corn as well as to motivate people to add such foods to their diets.

Children's artwork from the MFSI Cookbook.

Objective 1 included growing, using modern equipment and conventional plant/row spacing, two plots of sofke corn and Indian pumpkin. The seed for sofke corn planting was given to Luke Fisher, a certified organic farmer, whose family farm is located near Bristow in Creek County. Fisher seeded the corn indoors and transplanted one acre of corn on an isolated area of his property in order to prevent cross pollination by other varieties. The corn that Fisher grew was affected by limited rainfall and did not produce the amount of seed that was planned for in the original project design. There is no sofke corn seed available for distribution in 2013.

Indian pumpkin seed was a pass-along variety obtained from a Hanna farmer. Four acres of Indian pumpkin were planted by Barton Williams at Wilson Community Garden in Okmulgee County. The pumpkin was direct seeded to the field. While Indian pumpkin seed will be available for distribution in 2013, the crop was significantly affected by a squash bug infestation.

Objective 2 included training community growers about seed saving techniques. This was done through seed saving and cooking classes that were held three times at Wilson Indian Community Center and were led by elder community members. The focus of these classes were youth, although there was a broad range of class attendees that included other tribal community members (Okfuskee County) who were interested in holding similar classes. Berryhill offered two additional seed saving and cooking classes in other tribal communities and included Sapulpa Elderly Nutrition Program, which operates out of Sapulpa Indian Community Center, and is located in Creek County and Okmulgee Elderly Nutrition Center, located in Okmulgee County. The focus of these trainings for elders was to encourage them to include pumpkin as a regular part of their diets. Additionally, safer, healthier, and more efficient methods of preparation, and cooking Indian pumpkin were offered. The recipe for "fried" pumpkin was modified with healthier substitutes, olive oil and organic agave sweetener, for original ingredients, which included pork fat and sugar.

Objective 3 included working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Food and Fitness Policy Council to develop procurement policies for growers that produce sofke corn, Indian pumpkin, and other local, sustainably produced farm products. In September 2013 the tribal law-making body passed legislation to officially support tribal program purchases from local food producers, which was a direct result of procurement policy that was developed by the tribal food and fitness policy council.

Objective 4 utilized tribal elders to teach classes on preparing, processing, and cooking the traditional corn drink sofke, Indian pumpkin, and cvtvhakv, "blue bread," -- a dumpling made from corn meal. These classes, which targeted youth participants, were held at Wilson Indian Community Center and were taught by local community elders as well as Berryhill.

Objective 5 included the collection and publication of stories about traditional foods in the MFSI newsletter. Elders who offered information about traditional food ways often ended up being interviewed as a result of casual conversations where they revealed invaluable details related to knowledge systems that are rapidly being lost. One of the most valuable aspects of this project is the knowledge of food ways that are being documented. The work of this project is ongoing and

"It is critical for youth to learn how to grow and prepare and process traditional foods if such food ways are to continue."

has been the impetus for gaining valuable information about food processes that were thought to have been indefinitely lost with the passing of elders. There are still those who hold such knowledge and oftentimes it is not their own lived experience, but the memories of the old ways as told to them by elder mothers and grandmothers. It reminds us that progress, technology, and convenience is not without a price. Ancient knowledge systems, processes related to food production, and the way that Native languages encode such knowledge should be approached with an urgency for documentation.

This work is tied into building a tribal food system that includes approaches that begin at the grassroots level with tribal communities - elders teaching youth - to procurement policies that support tribal purchases from local growers for programs that feed young children and elders on a daily basis. The long term benefits of this work are directly related to the target audience. It is critical for youth to learn how to grow and prepare and process traditional foods if such food ways are to continue. As individuals that will be of child-bearing and care giving age in the next ten years it is critical that they continue such learning that will prepare them to grow food and cook healthy whole foods that will model positive patterns of behavior for the next generation. The work of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Food and Fitness Policy Council has been the catalyst for tribal law that supports tribal program procurement from local food producers, including growers. Traditional tribal whole foods are healthy, are tied to Mvskoke beliefs and identity, and are culturally appropriate foods that should be offered on the plates of tribal programs that feed young children and elders on a daily basis. Tribal laws that support the procurement of such whole foods from local growers has the potential to bolster the development of a tribal food system that can contribute to reversing diet-related diseases. Actionable efforts to begin building such a food system require the collaboration of tribal officials, leaders, programs, and communities, although it is yet to be realized."

Q: In what ways has the MFSI been a champion for improving health in your tribal community?
A: "Teaching how to grow healthy foods within our tribal communities."

Q: What advice would you offer tribes that are interested in starting their own community food system?

A: "Education, involvement and support from Tribal leaders.

Education: Our initial actions were to get as many people in our community educated as to food sustainability as possible. We did this by attending each community Tribal meetings and asking if we could speak for a few minutes regarding food and health issues. We gave out information pamphlets to tribal members and the general public and we offered educational classes at our facilities. Our staff traveled to as many places as possible to further educate themselves.

Involvement: We collaborated with as many of our existing Tribal government agencies as possible such as our Elderly Program, Diabetes Program, Indian Health, and WIC, along with these affiliations we were able to establish a Food and Fitness Policy entity and adopt legislation from the Tribe to adopt a Resolution for our Tribe regarding our Food and Fitness future.

Tribal Leaders: Our organization would not exist had it not been for the support from our Tribal leaders. Their interest, insight, and input help guide our organization on the path of sustainability. We continue to be a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization and apply for Grants but we also are in partnership with the Tribe. Once the Tribal leaders understood what we were doing and realized all the health benefits for our Tribal members, they offered their complete support."

Special thanks to Ms. June Marshall and the MFSI staff for sharing their time and stories. To learn more about this project, please find contact information on page 43.

Buffalo of the Oneida Nation Farm, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin. Photo courtesy of OCIFS.

Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems

Oneida Nation
Wisconsin

Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (OCIFS) is a comprehensive food system within the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin. Located just miles east of Green Bay, Wisconsin, the Oneida Nation has more than 16,000 enrolled members and the reservation spans more than 65,500 acres.

The following is an interview with Jeff Metoxen (Oneida) and William (Bill) VerVoort from July 2012. Jeff is Chairman of OCIFS and Bill is a Program Coordinator with OCIFS.

Q: What were the primary (or original) goals for starting OCIFS? Did they involve food sovereignty, identity, cultural preservation, improving health, or another issue?

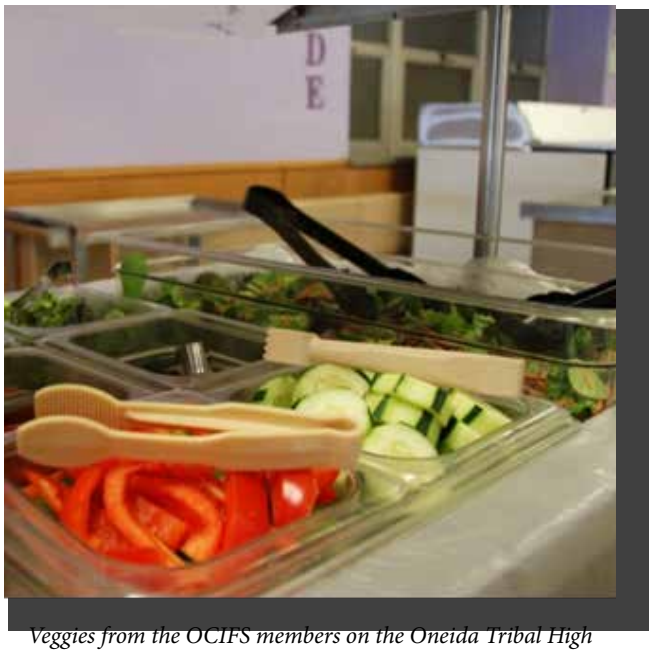
A: "The tribe recognized the importance of Food Security and Food Sovereignty, even if they were not the cliché words of that time. Like its name sake, the integrating of food was a primary goal of OCIFS. It required the involvement of the community and not just ones that worked directly with food. The current membership reflects the involvement and participation of the diverse approach we have to take to address our community's food insecurity. Our tribe faced and continues to address many issues that require them to be approached in different ways for success. It was not limited to food, health, cultural and traditional values, knowledge, and economic development. Each of these, including others not mentioned is always on our minds. We pursue ways and ideas to affect them in a positive manner. Our Food, especially our traditional meals are a primary aspect for these areas and it covers many fields and provides us all with sustenance in its many forms." Jeff Metoxen, Director Tsyunhehkwa

"It basically involved all of these things. It is difficult to say you have sovereignty when you have to rely on outside sources for your food supply, so yes food sovereignty did play a role. The same can be said of cultural preservation; as the saying goes "you are what you eat." It is very important to us that the Oneida

youth not only know of our traditional foods, but actually consume them as well. This leads us to the issues of our modern industrialized food system. Not only can the present food system be directly related to our health issues (of the 7,055 Oneidas living on or near the Oneida reservation 2158, 1 in 3, are participants in the Oneida Health Centers diabetic program, which does not include non-participants or the undiagnosed). But it also leads to the destruction of our environment (fuel consumption, run off pollution and many others)." William (Bill) VerVoort

Q: How did the OCIFS get started? (And how long has it taken to establish all the different programs: Oneida Farm, Food Distribution Program, Farmers Market, Orchard, Tsyunhehkwa, Falling Leaves 4-H, and Health Promotions?)

A: "Our first step was getting community data on health issues on this reservation, diabetes rate and related health data on issues involving health in our community. If you have a health center, they are required to keep data on health in the community. However, getting data back out of the system can be tricky. In our case, we used diagnostic codes to track health related issues. We are also working with a local Epicenter and a report is generated every two years, roughly, on community health issues. We receive the Special Diabetes Grant and part of the requirements is to look at the diabetes rate in our community on a yearly basis. Once we had a picture of the community health issues, education and awareness kicked in.



Veggies from the OCIFS members on the Oneida Tribal High School Lunch Menu. Farm To School Project. Photo courtesy of OCIFS.

We worked with a Traditional Wellness person to get a cultural perspective on food and indigenous foods for this community. We started looking at some of the health issues in our community. We also started looking at the school and issues of medication and health within our school system. A program was created to work on policy development and process improvement strategies of getting healthy food into our school system.

We discovered with the average transportation of foods to our area, fresh food is in transit possibly as long as two weeks or more. Over time, fruits and vegetables begin to lose nutritional value. You think you are eating healthy but food is depleted by the time it arrives here!

This got us thinking about integrating our own food products and locally grown organic farmers in our area, why not create a local food economy for our meals programs, which is the school, day care, child care and elderly meals programs, because the food is created by the same source for these programs.

Laying hens roaming the Tsyunhehkw^ fields (Oneida word for 'Life Sustenance'). Photo courtesy of OCIFS.

"It is very important to us that the Oneida youth not only know of our traditional foods, but actually consume them as well." William (Bill) VerVoort

Tsyunhehkwa Greenhouse, Seed & Plant Distribution Project. Photo courtesy of OCIFS.

When OCIFS began in 1994, we did not have enough production to provide enough food for the community. As our production increases, we are looking at how to integrate our own food products back into the tribal organization. This led us to doing a Community Food Assessment in 2009. We consider this document to be a continued work in progress and plan to update it every 3-4 years. From this we would like to create an advisory team to change some of the tribal purchasing policies to integrate our own foods back into the organization. Our goal is to integrate 10% of food purchases from OCIFS back into the tribal organization.

Oneida Farm started in 1978, Food Distribution Program started in 1980, Farmers Market started in 2001, Orchard started in 1994, Tsyunhehkwa started in 1995, Falling Leaves 4-H started in 2002."

Q: What is your favorite thing about being involved in a local food system?

A: "The possibilities and how important they are. The Oneida Tribe was way ahead of the curve when you think of the importance of food. In the past 5 years more and more people understand the relationship between food and our health. The projected health care costs of the U.S. in nutrition related diseases are $147 billion a year. But we are not just talking about money or even quality of life. We are talking about the security of this country. Presently, 27% of young adults are too overweight to qualify for military service. My favorite thing about being involved in the local food system is the importance and the difference we can make in our community."

Q: What traditional Oneida foods can be found in the different OCIFS programs?

A: "The Tsyunhehkwa program is the cultural food arm of OCIFS. They provide most of the traditional Oneida foods like the Oneida white corn, beans, squash and medicinal herbs. They also have a "Pick Your Own" berry batch. In addition they have free range poultry, eggs, and grass fed beef. They also provide a vast array of garden produce. The Apple Orchard grows strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, squash, pumpkins and 26 varieties of apples. The Oneida Nation Farm produce Black Angus beef and grass fed bison."

Q: The OCIFS has taken great strides to produce natural beef and buffalo (free of steroids, antibiotics, and hormones) and organically-grown produce whenever possible. How have these practices affected the sustainability of OCIFS?

A: "To be honest, in the short term they have somewhat adversely affected the sustainability of OCIFS. This is because to farm in the natural and

Oneida Farmers' Market. Photo courtesy of OCIFS.

OCIFS gift basket of local products. Photo courtesy of OCIFS.

organic method it is much more labor intensive and thus more costly. Although our products are superior in nutritional value it is a difficult for people to understand the necessary higher costs. However, we believe that as people continue to be better educated about the food system, they will be more willing to pay a higher price for a premium/healthy product."

Q: What advice would you offer tribes that are interested in starting their own community food system?

A: "As anything worth doing, it does come with barriers that need to be addressed in a pro-active manner.

- Cooks: We discovered that the cooks for our meals programs were very good at opening cans and simplistic heating of prepared food items. It took a lot of work and education to get them cooking again. They are now creating wonderful home cooked meals, on some days, with our own beef and buffalo. The support of the School System Food Service Director was important in making this work.
- Our meat is State Certified but not USDA Certified. Food for our meals programs comes from the USDA/Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Currently our traditional white corn is processed with a USDA certification so it was easier to integrate that product into the meals programs. After several months of negotiation with the UDSA regional office, we are now allowed to sell our meat to the school and serve it alongside the DPI feeding programs. Our meat is considered natural, with no added hormones, antibiotics and healthy meals.
- Internal Food Policies: In the past, we were told we couldn't get our foods into our own organization. We asked questions and now we are working to get our own foods into our organization. I would say never take "no" as an answer. Ask questions and talk directly to those that can make things happen for you. You may be surprised at the positive answers you get. I know we were.
- Community awareness and education are key to any community initiative. The community needed to know the current diabetes rate, the health problems in the community, nutritional inadequacies of our current food sources, and the extensive distances food travels to our community. We continue to do things that bring this to the attention of the community and continue to further educate the community.
- Don't give up. You may lose the little battles but think of new and better ways to overcome obstacles. A lot of times "no" means we need more information. We haven't stated our case thoroughly or in the right way for people to understand. Celebrate the small successes!!"

Special thanks to Mr. Jeff Metoxen and Mr. Bill VerVoort for sharing their time and stories. To learn more about this project, please find contact information on page 43.

Seven Arrows Garden and beautiful New Mexico sky. Photo courtesy of Kori Marmon.

Seven Arrows Garden

Pueblo of Laguna
New Mexico

The Seven Arrows Garden is a collective project located in the Pueblo of Laguna in west central New Mexico. The Pueblo of Laguna's 500,000-acre reservation is surrounded by beautiful mesas and mountains, covering four counties. As of 2012, Laguna Pueblo has approximately 8,524 enrolled members, and consists of six villages, which include Laguna, Mesita, Paguate, Seama, Paraje, and Encinal.

The following is an interview with Kori Marmon (Laguna) from April 2013. Kori is Executive Director of the Seven Arrows Garden.

Q: What were the primary or original goals for starting the Seven Arrows Garden? Did they involve food sovereignty, identity, cultural preservation, improving health, or another issue?

A: "I hope this reaches you in good spirits and in good health. My name is Kori Marmon from the Pueblo of Laguna, New Mexico. I am a wife, a mother of three and a passionate community member. I began the idea of the Seven Arrow Garden several years ago. When I lost my father to diabetes and other health related issues, I began to change the way I looked at health and then began the spark of ideas for the Seven Arrows Garden. I knew there were many needs that our people needed help with, I was just now sure how and what I could go to continue with my healing and help heal my community at the same time. Then my husband gave me my first plant that I took care of and helped me grow out of the depression I was in from the loss of my father. I began to see how blessed I am with a great support system of friends and family that all came together in using what helped me to heal and pull myself out of my depression. "Things" just started to happen, one being the resources to build the Seven Arrows Garden. My mother, who is the best advocate I know, has been my light that never fails to shine, guides me and encourages me to never give up. I also think it was all her praise for my efforts that has given me this opportunity to talk about what I have been

doing for my community and what I will continue to do for my community through the Seven Arrows Garden. My Aunt Natalie Thomas, who works for the "Healthy Heart Program" for the Pueblo of Laguna, has been pivotal to all the connections that began to happen. She began introducing me to different programs that are doing various jobs that involve gardening, traditional farming techniques, saving and preserving traditional seeds, orchards and orchard maintenance, soil composition and about building community. She also took me to different workshops that helped build my knowledge and my own relationships with the programs that have helped the Seven Arrows Garden idea grow. I was amazed when I began to realize that building a community garden could be a great contribution to the overall happiness of my community. I knew that growing something helped change my life and wanted others to be able to heal also. I began to lose weight, be a better parent, became more active in my community and in our local schools.

I talked to anyone that would listen to this big idea I had. I didn't always get listening ears to hear me but the ones that heard me began talking to others about what I was talking about. A woman by the name of Darlene Waseta from the Village of Mesita was employed at the Laguna Department of Education that receives funding from the Kellogg Foundation that funds "Community Learning Exchanges" in communities across the country. She graciously invited me to attend two of these gatherings that became the driving force behind getting the first community garden built. I learned about "Gracious Space" and wanted everyone to experience it. This learning experience has become one of my best tools.

When I had the tools that were going to help form my ideas into real achievements, I began to focus my efforts to building the Seven Arrows Garden. I began with Hank Bruce and Tomi Folk from "Hunger Grow Away." They provided me with my first raised garden bed, seeds and clippings to expand my knowledge on horticulture. The year I planted my second larger garden in my backyard, I used dry farming techniques, cross pollination techniques and planted only non-genetically modified seeds. My youngest child's Head Start class came on a class field trip to our garden and made me want to plant for a larger group. They have not forgotten that field trip and continue to be some of my greatest supporters.

Once again my Aunt Natalie Thomas introduced me to more people that have taught me even more skills to improve my efforts. Then I met Sarah Montgomery from "The Garden's Edge" that introduced me to Magdalena, Edson and Julian. From them I learned about how genetically-modified seeds can compromise the integrity of heirloom seeds. I have since applied the knowledge of how to prevent cross pollination, seed saving techniques and grassroots efforts to teach about these issues that have aided the success of the Seven Arrows Garden. I am deeply grateful to Sarah for her work in Guatemala and her being able to bring her connections with the Mayans to the Pueblo of Laguna. Through this partnership I was able to have Magdalena and Edson (Mayans) come to Laguna and present at Cubero Elementary School, Laguna Middle School, Laguna Acoma High School and at the

Opening irrigation line. Photo courtesy of Kori Marmon.

"With each new training, more of my people came, learning from our guests and sharing their knowledge. It was nice to see everyone having the opportunity to share, be valued and heal." Kori Marmon (Laguna)

Pueblo of Laguna's Senior Center. They modified their presentation for all the different ages and spoke about the issues with genetically-modified seeds and how it directly affects their way of life in Guatemala. It was amazing to see the strong connection between our two cultures. I am very thankful to say that we are going to be able to have them come to visit our community again later this year and present what they are doing in their community and how we can work to do the same for Laguna.

Throughout the planting season we were able to bring other presenters from Hopi. Clayton Brascoupe and Amigillioi came to Laguna and taught us dry farming techniques and what we can plant to improve the quality of our poor soil. They were also very gracious and provided us with dry farmed seeds from Hopi that can grow in our harsh desert climate. The other wonderful people we were blessed to welcome were Kobo and Mary also from Hopi that have been doing amazing work within their own family lands. They came and taught us the dry farming techniques they use to plant fruit and nut orchards in the desert area of Hopi. They also answered questions about tree pruning, trimming and about how to maintain an orchard. Sarah and I are currently working together to bring them back to Laguna and present again. Sarah also introduced me to a gentleman by the name of Bard Edington that showed us how to landscape our garden, how to use grey water to water our ten fruit trees in our backyard and informed us about other methods he uses to improve the quality of our soil. With each new training, more of my people came, learning from our guests and sharing their knowledge. It was nice to see everyone having the opportunity to share, be valued and heal.

I have learned so much from all the people in my life that I wanted to share the knowledge in a space that welcomes everyone, where everyone feels safe to be themselves and is open to learning what is an inherit knowledge for many indigenous nations. I feel that the connections that we have to each other and to the earth are very important and need to be nurtured in order to heal ourselves. My physical, behavioral, mental, emotional and spiritual health, have all improved since I began on this journey to build

Photo courtesy of Kori Marmon.

something for my beloved community of Laguna. This is why the mission statement for the Seven Arrows Garden is stated as: "Through illumination, introspection and innocence; we want to create balance, teach earnest communication and share knowledge through gardening so that we may all prosper in harmonic resonance"."

Q: What is your favorite thing about being involved in a local food system?

A: "I love being involved in our local food system because I have learned so much about our agrarian culture, how our ancestors survived adversity and how those lessons can help us thrive even today. I want to help build sustainable economic development that will benefit our entire community. I would like to see fresh fruit and vegetables being grown and sold in our own supermarket from our own community, for us to have our own farmer/artisans market and community orchards. Since I began this endeavor I have had the honor of listening to the stories of our elders that tell us how we had fields and orchards, how we worked to help one another and how it took a village to raise our children. I want my contribution to my community to be one that can change with time and help build the foundation to a strong community that can truly be a sovereign nation. I never thought that I would find contentment on my reservation, but now I cannot

imagine home being anywhere else but here in Laguna.

There are many favorite things that make this worthwhile every day. The smiles and questions of the children, being referred to as the "plant whisperer," the trust, respect and support of the elders and knowing that my heart continuously steers me in the right direction. I love being able to go to the schools and plant flowers with the students, speaking up at our village meetings, while empowering others to have a voice. Above all I can see how all this positive change has helped my own children learn about our core values: Love, Discipline, Respect and Obedience. These are the things that we are always hearing but don't always see being practiced. In the garden we learn and practice these core values because it is part of what contributes to a successful garden. There are so many favorite things, but what I can say is the holistic view I have taken on health is what is helping me, my family and my community in the building of our community garden. Together with family, friends, children, elders, veterans, teachers, tribal leaders, and our surrounding off-reservation members, I see of our greatest achievements is together we are building our next generation of farmers, healers, leaders, community organizers, teachers, dreamers, and this is due to the healing that has begun by planting and getting back to our roots as farmers. This is what our gardening and planting has amounted to."

Q: What traditional Laguna foods are found in the Seven Arrows Garden? Is there a particular approach you take when restoring traditional foods and methods?

A: "In the Seven Arrows Garden we plant only non-genetically modified seeds, so all of our seeds come from other Pueblos and local seed banks. In order to keep our seeds from becoming cross contaminated, we plant using traditional knowledge and techniques. We plant sunflowers around and between all corn crops to prevent cross pollination. We plant the corn, beans and squash (the Three Sisters) together because they are all companion plants that help one another grow and thrive. We also plant Swiss chard, kale, spinach, amaranth, chile, tomatoes, eggplant, romaine lettuce, Carnival carrots, beets, sugar snap peas, Big Max and Cinderella pumpkins, cucumbers and cilantro. I think it is important to open your palate to the possibilities of healthy eating and learn about the many varieties of vegetables and fruit that can be grown. I would like to eventually grow year round and be able to teach others how to do the same.

When we plant, we first look at the position of the sun as it travels through the sky throughout the year, the phases of the moon, the natural flow of the water and the surrounding environment. These are some of the things that will help us have a successful planting season. I have also learned that it is important to talk to all the other farmers in the area and with our neighbors, Pueblo of Acoma. This helps us know when to water, how the water is flowing and what others are planting in their field."

Q: In what ways has the Seven Arrows Garden been a champion for improving health in your tribal community?

A: "The ways that Seven Arrows Garden has been a champion for improving health for the community of Laguna has been by providing free workshops with meals, providing fresh vegetables to everyone, giving different options to people who need to provide community service hours, a place for veterans to heal from post-traumatic stress disorder; providing families activities to build stronger connections to one another, showing children their worth and purpose, giving elders opportunities to share their knowledge and doing it all without funding. I have made full use of the resources in our community and in our state to help make this possible. With the help of the Healthy Heart Program, Hunger Grow Away, The Garden's Edge and the individuals from Hopi, I have been able to provide their resources and funding to help make this possible. I also want to mention Sharon Bedenbaugh from the Teen Outreach Program from the University of New Mexico. Through her program I was able to spend time in her class at the Laguna Middle School and two classes at the Laguna Acoma High School providing presentations and activities that were about gardening. The youth at the two schools seeded, cleaned, flavored and roasted the sunflower seeds that were grown in the Seven Arrows Garden.

"I was amazed when I began to realize that building a community garden could be a great contribution to the overall happiness of my community." Kori Marmon (Laguna)

All the donations and proceeds were given to both the Pueblo of Laguna and the Pueblo of Acoma's Social Services for Domestic Violence Awareness. It was so successful that we sold out and have people asking when we will be selling the seeds again. I feel that it is important for the youth to learn about providing service to their community through activities that they can apply to their own success in life. The Seven Arrows Garden will continue to grow and thrive for the community of Laguna by working to provide workshops, activities, someday employment opportunities and always fresh fruit and vegetables. I know that through these activities the lives in our community can change, hope can be restored, trust can be built, connections can be made and the overall health of our community can be improved through prevention, and the healing of the mind, body, and spirit, will be on going, always changing with time and the elements."

Q: What advice would you offer tribes that are interested in starting their own community food system?

A: "The advice that I would give to other tribes that would be interested in starting their own community food system is to look at what is already working in their community, make use of the resources that are already in your community and in your state (to the best of your ability), look at the needs that aren't being met, and talk with parents, elders and community members. Be involved. Use the principles of the Spirit Rooted Activism; stillness, envision, interpersonal healing, have depth of insight, do radical good and create a sacred place. Talk to local farmers, become active readers of the Farmer's Almanac, learn about your environment and play with the youth. When I take the time to play with the youth, it helps me better understand the needs of our entire community. The youth are insight to what is going on in our homes and what the needs of a community are. Have a belief that can be your guide to what is going to be successful in your community. I cannot say there are steps you take that are going to work for every community but what I can say is that all indigenous people are connected to our Mother Earth, so pray and ask for guidance.

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you the short version of my story. May all your hearts be open to the possibilities of happiness, your families be good in all aspects of their health and always remember to show appreciation… ohh… and smile. It's the free gift that keeps on giving."

Special thanks to Ms. Kori Marmon of the Seven Arrows Garden for sharing her time and stories. To learn more about this project, please find contact information on page 43.

Sunflowers and amaranth. Photo courtesy of Kori Marmon.

Tribal elder, Marilyn Wandrey, hard at work in the traditional plants garden. Photo courtesy of Suquamish Community Health Program.

SUQUAMISH COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM

Suquamish Tribe
Washington

The Suquamish Community Health Program is a part of the Suquamish Tribe in Washington State just north of Seattle. The Port Madison Indian Reservation spans nearly 7,500 acres of the Kitsap Peninsula, and is home to the Suquamish Tribe. With about 1,061 enrolled members, the Suquamish Tribe is surrounded by a plentiful supply of seafood, traditional plants and game.

The following is an interview with Barbara Hoffman and Fran Miller of the Suquamish Community Health Program from May 2013. Barbara is a Community Health Nurse & Supervisor and Fran is the Community Nutritionist.

Q: What were the primary (or original) goals for starting the Suquamish Community Health Program's Traditional Foods Project? Did they involve food sovereignty, identity, cultural preservation, improving health, or another issue?

A: "The project evolved with the goal of improving health by encouraging consumption of traditional foods as well as contemporary foods that have nutrient profiles similar to the traditional foods that currently have limited availability. There has been a cultural resurgence with the annual canoe journey. Traditional foods are an essential part of this cultural resurgence, and can help with both renewed cultural identity and a return to the good health that tribal members enjoyed prior to introduction of fast foods, commodity foods, and other non-traditional foods."

Q: What is your favorite thing about being involved in a local food system?

A: "We spend a lot of time learning and then passing on that knowledge. Seeing others get excited as the program developed from just an idea has been very

gratifying. Spending time interviewing the elders about food traditions that their families practiced during their younger years was eye-opening. We were able to use what we learned from those interviews as we planned our program and educational tools."

Q: What traditional Suquamish foods are found in the Suquamish Community Health Program's initiatives? Is there a particular approach you take when restoring traditional foods and methods?

A: "The tradition of seafood harvesting and consumption was already very strong in the community; we have an active seafood program, and a number of tribal members are involved in fishing, clamming, and diving for geoduck. For that reason, we chose to focus on traditional plants with our program.

Some of the foods that we have focused on include mushrooms, nettle, traditional tea plants (marsh tea, horsetail, red clover, berries and their leaves, fireweed, devil's club, yarrow, plantain, wild rose), berries (huckleberry, salmonberry, soapberry, thimbleberry, wild coastal strawberry, elderberry, oval-leaved blueberry, cranberry, wild trailing blackberry, salal berry), skunk cabbage (also called Indian wax paper, not used as food, but as a wrap in cooking), Indian plum, fiddleheads, fireweed shoots, thimbleberry and salmonberry shoots, edible flowers, hazelnuts, and
evergreen tree tips."

Q: In what ways has the Suquamish Tribe's Traditional Foods Program been a champion for improving health in your tribal community?

A: "We try to infuse traditional foods principles into everything that the community health program does. Some of the specific projects that we are working on include:

- Promoting healthy beverages such as water, and unsweetened teas as the drink of choice. We are conducting programs such as Water Wednesdays and a 5 week healthy beverage challenge to promote traditional beverages in place of sugar sweetened drinks.
- Promoting the use of traditional plants and the use of modern day equivalents.
- Traditional foods tasting at the early learning center.
- Traditional foods and organic garden produce for the Elder's lunch program
- Promoting the use of traditional foods and beverages at community events.
- Traditional medicinal teas and salves.
- Regularly scheduled harvesting trips and classes.
- Classes planned for the coming year include gardening classes in the spring with raised bed kits and seeds to participants, women's herbal wellness, herbs for summertime wellness and first aid, men's

Tribal youth Ashley Boure gathering seaweed. Photo courtesy of Suquamish Community Health Program.

Gathering seaweed. Photo courtesy of Suquamish Community Health Program.

herbal wellness, making herbal infused oils, salve and balms, garden goodness, preserving fruits and berries, canning salmon, salmon filet and food safety, traditional cooking techniques, traditional foods for the holidays, herbs for winter wellness.

- Harvesting trips include nettles, berries, seaweed and mushrooms.
- General raising of awareness about traditional foods and organic gardening.
- Harvesting trips have also been used to promote traditional physical activity.
- High school language class: connecting the Lushootseed language with plants and introducing students to traditional foods.
- Classes such as traditional tea making and Traditional Foods Bingo for participants in the Wellness program and lunch & learns for tribal elders, staff, and community."

Q: What advice would you offer tribes that are interested in starting their own community food system?

A: "The first step is to partner with others in your area who is knowledgeable about traditional foods.

- In our case, we began attending classes held by Northwest Indian College's Traditional Plants Program to learn all that we could before trying to begin our own program.
- Talk to the elders to learn about food traditions in your community.
- Find community members (elders, or other tribal members) who can be champions for the work.
- We also conducted a community food assessment, which consisted of data gathering, key stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and a community meeting to set community goals for improving the nutritional health. Our long term goal is to make it easier for people living on the Port Madison Indian Reservation to choose healthy foods, in other words making the healthy choice the easy choice.
- Resources that others may want to use to conduct their own community food assessment include:
- First Nations Development Institute's Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool. Available at www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/sites/default/files/tools/FNDIFSATFinal.pdf
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Recommended community strategies and measurements to prevent obesity in the United States. Available at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5807.pdf
- Moving to the Future, a community nutrition and physical activity assessment toolkit. Available at www.movingtothefuture.org/"

Special thanks to Ms. Barbara Hoffman, Fran Miller, and the Suquamish Community Health Program for sharing their time and stories. To learn more about this project, please find contact information on page 43.

Julia Bennett gathering nettles. Photo courtesy of Suquamish Community Health Program.

Photo courtesy of NWIC Traditional Plants & Foods Program.

Traditional Plants & Foods Program

Northwest Indian College (NWIC)
Washington

The Traditional Plants & Foods Program is a part of the Northwest Indian College (NWIC) Extension Office. NWIC is an accredited tribal college located on the Lummi Indian Reservation in Washington, just 20 miles from the Canadian border, and serves approximately 1,400 students from more than 100 unique tribes and First Nations bands. The Traditional Plants and Foods Program and the greater NWIC Extension Office provide significant outreach services, offering hundreds of community education programs to thousands of attendees each year.

The following is an interview with Vanessa Cooper (Lummi) and Elise Krohn of the Traditional Plants & Food Program from April 2013. Vanessa is the Lummi Traditional Plants Educator and Elise is a Traditional Plants Educator.

Q: What were the primary (or original) goals for starting the Traditional Plants & Food Program? Did they involve food sovereignty, identity, cultural preservation, improving health, or another issue?

A: "The first program implemented was called Diabetes Prevention through Traditional Plants. This was a two-year training aimed to educate tribal health professionals and interested community members in the uses of plants for food and medicines so that they could incorporate what they learned into their existing programs or serve as valuable resources within their communities. The main goal of this of this was to create more teachers in tribal communities to carry and share the knowledge." Vanessa Cooper, Lummi Traditional Plants Educator

"Our hope was to start a traditional foods and medicines revolution where tribal communities recover their knowledge of and access to the native foods and medicines that sustained their ancestors for generations. So much has been lost but there is still a lot intact. People travel from all over Western Washington to attend gatherings where they can learn and share. As we make food and prepare medicines together, people light up, stories are remembered, native languages are spoken, and people are united by what is important to them. We know that native foods and medicines promote health, but they also feed peoples spirits, bring different generations together, cultivate relationships with the land, and build cultural identity." Elise Krohn, Traditional Plants Educator

"As we make food and prepare medicines together, people light up, stories are remembered, native languages are spoken, and people are united by what is important to them." Elise Krohn

Q: What is your favorite thing about being involved in a local food system?

A: "I have many 'favorites' about being involved in a local food system but I would have to say what excites me most is not only being a part of creating access to good healthy food but being a part of bringing people together around the table to share that food. That is where intergenerational knowledge is shared. That is a gift to me and I don't claim to own that gift, I consider it a responsibility to share that gift with others because it is not mine alone. The knowledge needs to be shared and passed down in order to keep it alive." Vanessa Cooper

"My favorite thing about being involved in the local food system is tasting my way through the seasons. I get so excited as new plants like nettle, camas, thimbleberries, and rosehips are ready to harvest. My body has tuned with what is ripening in the natural world and I feel healthier physically, mentally, and spiritually for that. Throughout the years our program has built an enthusiastic community of people who harvest and use native foods. We share places, harvest techniques, and recipes with each other." Elise Krohn

Q: What traditional Muckleshoot, Lummi (or other nearby tribal communities) foods are found in the program? Is there a particular approach you take when restoring traditional foods and methods?

A: "Historically, our people ate many different foods. Each season offers a variety of different foods based on what is available that time of year. For example: spring offers wild spring greens such as nettles; summer offers a variety of berries full of antioxidants and flavanoids; fall offers roots like dandelions; and winter offers preserved foods, dried meats and berries. Each season is filled with all the nutrients and vitamins necessary for a healthy lifestyle. When creating restoration projects it is important to address the barriers to accessing traditional foods and how to overcome them. The following examples are current projects that the Traditional Plants and Foods Program is doing to address this." Vanessa Cooper

Q: In what ways has the Traditional Plants & Food Program been a champion for improving health in your tribal community?

- A: "The Lummi Traditional Food program approached this by conducting community based participatory research that promotes healthy eating habits. Family participants receive weekly boxes of fresh produce (Community Supported Agriculture) and they participate in regular cooking classes to learn how to utilize the foods they receive. This model has been successful and the hope is that it will be emulated throughout Indian Country. This program is coordinated by Vanessa Cooper, Lummi tribal member.
- The Traditional Foods & Medicines Program at the Northwest Indian Treatment Center features hands-on classes and healing gardens where patients learn methods for growing, harvesting, processing and preparation. This program is coordinated by Elise Krohn, Traditional Plant Educator.

Photos courtesy of NWIC Traditional Plants & Foods Program.

"Food is at the center of our culture... it feeds our bodies and it feeds our spirit. We create a relationship with the plants and foods that we eat and it becomes a spiritual experience when we harvest the food ourselves, bring it home to process with our own hands, and then consume it together as a family. Food brings people together... that is when healing takes place." Vanessa Cooper

Photos courtesy of NWIC Traditional Plants & Foods Program.

- The Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project is about increasing understanding of native foods and building community food security. This program does this by exploring the tribes' food assets and access to local, healthy, and traditional foods for all generations. It also builds knowledge and experience within the tribal community around nutrition and traditional foods in a culturally appropriate way. This program is coordinated by Valerie Segrest."

"Food is at the center of our culture and, when we are sick, our elders tell us to eat our traditional foods. It feeds our bodies and it feeds our spirit. We create a relationship with the plants and foods that we eat and it becomes a spiritual experience when we harvest the food ourselves, bring it home to process with our own hands, and then consume it together as a family. Food brings people together and I believe that, that is when healing takes place. Our program has been a champion for improving health by providing a space for the teachings to take place. Where people can gather to share stories of the way things were and learn from one another. Remembering the teachings of our ancestors and eating the food our ancestors ate reconnects us as a people to each other and to our place. This is how our health is maintained and our programs have created the space for our people to reclaim that part of our culture." Vanessa Cooper

Q: What advice would you offer tribes that are interested in starting their own community food system?

A: "I have learned that knowledge is wealth and that the wealth comes from the people. Our people carry gifts of knowledge whether they know it or not. It is important to bring people together who share the same vision for a healthy community to start the conversation. Through the conversation, those gifts emerge. People feel empowered when they realize that what they have been doing their whole lives is a gift and it is then that they want to share it with others. It's contagious. People hear about it, participate in it, and then want more. I tell others to start there. To reach out and bring people together to discover those gifts and to create a platform where those gifts can be shared." Vanessa Cooper

"I think our greatest strength is that we listen to the needs of those we serve and then build programs based on that. We look within the community to find answers. Through identifying and strengthening what is already working in the food system, we have a foundation to grow from. Community based participatory research is a model that has helped communities to take ownership of projects that we run. Partnerships are essential for creating a strong food system. Which private, state, and federal land holders will allow harvesting for native foods? How can you build bridges between tribal programs like natural resources, cultural heritage, education, health, and social services? Sharing resources can amplify the good work that is happening." Elise Krohn

Special thanks to Ms. Vanessa Cooper and Ms. Elise Krohn for sharing their time and stories. To learn more about this project, please find contact information on page 43.

"My favorite thing about being involved in the local food system is tasting my way through the seasons. I get so excited as new plants like nettle, camas, thimbleberries, and rosehips are ready to harvest." Elise Krohn

TRADITIONAL FOODS RECIPES

ON^'STASE OHNEKA'KELI
(GREEN CORN SOUP)

Recipe by Randy Cornelius
Submitted by the Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems

1 large smoked pork hock
1 smoked turkey leg
1 package of salt pork
1 large onion
4 qts white corn
2 yellow zucchini
1 med. rutabaga
½ lb snow peas
1 bunch green onions
1 lb baby lima beans
½ lb green/wax beans

In slow cooker add one big hunk of smoked pork hock, a smoked turkey let, a diced up chunk of salt pork and one great big smackin onion cover completely with water and set on low. Trim off any fat from meat. Cook for 24 hours. Keep covered.

Boil up who knows how much white corn, enough cobs to make four quarts when cut off the cob. When the meat is done take it out of the slow pot and refrigerate. Add the green corn to the juice in the slow cooker and cook on low for 8-10 hours. Add more water if needed. Keep covered, add some pepper.

When corn in done pour into kettle and add 1 medium rutabaga, ½ pound snow peas, some diced up green onions, I pound baby lima beans, ½ pound of diced up green and wax beans. When rutabaga and beans are almost done add two sliced up yellow zucchini and two green zucchini's.

Trim the fat from the 1 pound of side pork and cook. Dice it up and add to the soup. Sort through the pork hock for the meat and feed the rest to your dog. Remove the meat from the turkey leg and discard the bones. Cut meat up into small chunks of burning love and add to soup.

Corn Bread Flour

Submitted by the Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems

1 quart white corn
1 cup hard wood ashes sifted

Bring 2 quarts of water to boil, add white corn and wood ashes. Kernels will turn orange. Boil 20 minutes. Kernels will turn yellow in color. Check a kernel to see if hull comes off easily. If not boil another 5 minutes and recheck. When corn is ready, place in corn washing basket or wire strainer, rinse rubbing kernels against sides to get corn hulls off. Rub corn between hands to check if hull is off. Place corn in food dryer for 4 hours, or place on sheet on table with fan on until dry. If you dry on table, occasionally move the kernels to help dry it out. Once the kernels are dry, grind with a hand or electric grinder. Sift and regrind corn that is left.

Corn Bread Recipe

Submitted by the Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems

2 cups white corn flour
½ cup cooked beans (kidney, red, or pinto)
¼ tsp salt (optional)
1¾ cups boiling water

Combine corn flour, beans, salt. Add boiling water. Mix thoroughly. Dip hands in cold water, dough will be very hot. Form dough into ball and flatten to 4" circle. Cook in a 4 quart kettle of water with a mild boil for 30 minutes.

Corn Mush Flour
3 cups boiling water
1 cup corn flour
3 Tbsp. butter
1/4 cup maple syrup
Simmer first 2 ingredients about 10 minutes, stir to prevent sticking. Add syrup, nuts, butter, and berries last. Serve warm or cold. Add nuts and berries to taste.

Makes about 4 cups.

Tsyunhehkwa Cannery
Tsyunhehkwa (Place where they put food away)
Phone: (920) 869-4379

TSYUNHEHKWA
(JOON-HEY-QWA) LIFE SUSTENANCE
WHITE CORN SOUP

Submitted by the Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems

White Corn Soup (1 Pound) hulling out using Hardwood Ash. Makes about 3 quarts. Usually it takes 2 days to make the Corn Soup, but it can be done in one day if you start early in the morning.

1 Pound Dry Raw Corn
2 Cups Hardwood Ash
4 Quarts Water
1 Large Kettle
2 Cups of cooked Beans (Kidney, Red, Pinto...) or 1 can, Your choice
1 Pound of cooked meat (Pork, Salt Pork, Turkey...) Again your choice

DAY 1

- Cook meat - Cool and separate meat and juices, refrigerate over night. Remove fat from juice before adding to soup.
- Bring Water and Wood Ash to boil. Then drain off ash water, the water will still be ash gray.
- Bring Ash Water and Corn to a boil, corn will turn brown if boiled too long. Simmer for 2 ½ hours. Stir and add water to keep the same level. Corn will turn bright orange then back to yellowish white.
- Drain and wash corn in kettle in cold water, rubbing corn with hands to help remove hulls. Drain water to remove hulls, then repeat washing steps of adding water and rubbing the corn about 3 or 4 times until corn is clean of hulls. Corn should still be hard, though some corn may crack, which is ok. It will split if ashes are not strong enough.
- Place Corn and fresh water back on stove to simmer 1 more hour. You can use a strainer to remove last hulls that float to the top as you are simmering. You do not need to remove all hulls, but you will be removing most. Corn is then ready for soup, simmer again for one more hour. Drain and cool, then refrigerate.

DAY 2

- Simmer corn in meat juice and water to cover 1 inch above corn for 1 hour.
- Add cooked drained beans and cut up cooked meat, simmer for 1-2 hours, allowing flavors to cook together.
- Add water as needed.

You may add salt, pepper and/or season to taste. EAT and ENJOY!

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Smoked Salmon Deviled Eggs

Created by Julia Bennett
Suquamish Traditional Plants Program Coordinator

Smoked Salmon is a traditional food that is still very popular in our community. Duck and seagull eggs are also a traditional food. Today, chicken and duck eggs are more readily available and are combined with salmon in this tasty recipe!

Makes 24

1 dozen hard boiled eggs
3-4 ounces Smoked salmon (flaked)
½ cup reduced fat or regular Mayonnaise
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
½ - 1 teaspoon Horseradish (optional)
1 tablespoon Butter (optional, this keeps egg yolks from drying out)
Salt, pepper, garlic powder, celery salt, paprika, pepper sauce
Fresh herbs to garnish

Shell eggs and cut in half. Remove yolks, place in bowl. Add smoked salmon and mix with yolks till fairly well blended. Add mayo, butter, mustard and seasonings to taste. Pipe or spoon back into egg whites and garnish with fresh herbs or paprika. Keep chilled.

Salmon & Nettle Soup

Created by Julia Bennett
Suquamish Traditional Plants Program Coordinator

Try to make your own fish stock from the salmon bones! It will taste better than store bought! I also add roasted camas bulbs to this soup whenever I am fortunate enough to have some available!

5 – 6 cups water or fish stock
1 lb. wild salmon deboned, skinned, and cut into bite sized pieces
1 medium onion diced
1 stalk celery diced
1 medium carrot peeled and diced
1 - 2 cups blanched young nettles chopped
2 - 3 tablespoons olive oil
Garlic powder, salt & pepper to taste

In large pot bring stock to a simmer. Sauté onion, carrot and celery over medium heat for 3 minutes, then add chopped nettles and continue to cook for another 3 minutes.
Add vegetable mixture to simmering stock. Reduce heat to low and cook 15 minutes. Add salmon, put lid on pan and turn off heat. Let sit for 5 minutes or until salmon is cooked. Serve and enjoy!

Huckleberry Salad Dressing

Created by Julia Bennett
Suquamish Traditional Plants Program Coordinator

Suquamish lands are rich with many types of berries and they have always been dearly loved by the Suquamish people. This dressing is delicious on wild greens, spring salad greens and fruit salads!

1 ½ - 2 cups Huckleberries, Salal berries, blackberries or Juneberries
¼ cup Balsamic vinegar
3/4 cup light olive oil or organic canola or sunflower oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice (optional)
2 tablespoons water
1 – 2 tablespoons Honey
Salt & pepper to taste

Puree huckleberries, water, lemon juice, honey and vinegar in food processor, add salt and pepper. While processor is running add oil in a slow, steady stream. Adjust seasoning if needed.

Vegetable, Elk and Wild Rice Soup

Created by Julia Bennett
Suquamish Traditional Plants Program Coordinator

This is a popular meal that I created to serve during my classes. Traditionally it would not have included the rice and wild roots such as camas and wild carrot would have been used.

2 lbs. ground elk meat (can substitute venison or buffalo)
2 cups wild or brown rice or quinoa cooked
2 stalks celery chopped
1 medium onion chopped
6 cloves garlic chopped
1 - 2 turnips peeled and cubed
1 - 2 rutabagas peeled and cubed
3 - 4 carrots peeled and sliced
1 – 2 parsnips peeled and sliced
Wild greens or spinach
8 cups Vegetable, Beef, or chicken broth
4 cups V-8 juice (low sodium)
Olive or canola oil
Fresh or dried herbs to taste (rosemary, marjoram, thyme, parsley, sage)
Salt and Pepper to taste

Brown meat, onions and garlic together in a large pot that will hold at least 1 gallon. Add all other vegetables (except wild greens or spinach), broth and V-8 juice. If using dried herbs add them now…if using fresh wait and add them about 1/2 hour before serving. Cook on medium low for 1 hour. Add cooked rice and fresh herbs (if using them) cook for another 20-30 minutes. Add spinach or wild greens and more liquid (broth, V-8 juice or water) if needed. Taste and season with salt and pepper if needed and serve. Serves 10-15

MVSKOKE 'INDIAN PUMPKIN' SEED SAVING

Step 1

Halve pumpkin.

Step 2

Remove seed.

Step 3

Set seed aside and remove fiber if desired.

Step 4

Pumpkin with seeds removed.

Indian Pumpkin Seed Saving Terms: Mvskoke ~ English
cvse 'pumpkin'
slafkv 'knife'
hakv 'spoon'
estvcetv 'to cut' (with knife)
akatetv 'to scrape out'
akkofetv 'to scoop out'
vkvrpetv 'to dry' (to dry out)

Step 5

Rinse seed in colander if desired.

Step 6

Place seed on paper for several days to dry. Store in glass jar in a cool, dark, dry area.

Traditional Mvskoke Foods Recovery Project
Sustainable Community Innovation Grant
was funded by:
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
Southern Rural Development Center

For more information on this project,
Contact:
Stephanie B. Berryhill, project manager
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OSAFKE COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

BY STEPHANIE B. BERRYHILL AS GIVEN BY HER GREAT-AUNT PAULINE PAKOSKA BILLY

STEP 1

STEP 2

STEP 3

STEP 4

Ingredient	Amount
Osafke	3 Cups
Lye	3/4 Cup
Water	1 Gallon
Recipe serves	**6**

Instructions

Place *osafke* in a large bowl or medium-size dish pan and wash thoroughly and repeatedly. The chaff will rise to the top and should be poured off with the water. Pick through the *osafke* corn in order to remove chaff that does not rise to the top – the chaff will be kernels that are small and very hard. Sometimes the tips of the some of *osafke* corn are very dark, actually black in appearance, and you may pinch it off and discard it. It does not cook down and is not edible. If you leave it in, it is okay – *osafke* drinkers will just spit it out.

Put water in a large granite / porcelain pot, add osafke, and set flame to medium-high. Bring to a steady boil and cook for three hours stirring regularly and adding water as needed. Test a kernel for doneness by smashing between thumb and index finger. If it gives easily it is ready for lye. Turn down heat to medium flame and add lye. Stir often, watch it very closely, add water as needed, and cook for one more hour.

Cooking Time: 4 hours

Osafke **Cooking Terms** **Mvskoke ~ English**
vce-cvlvtwe 'flint corn'
kvpe-cvfke 'lye'
esnorickv 'cooking pot'
hakv 'spoon'
motesv 'osafke jug'
enfottetv 'to pick out'
seteyametv 'to stir with' (a spoon)
esmorecetv 'to boil' (something in water)
sakcvnetv 'to pour' (one liquid into a pot of soup, *osafke*, *etc.*)

Traditional Mvskoke Foods Recovery Project
Sustainable Community Innovation Grant
was funded by:
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Southern Rural Development Center

For more information on this project,
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Kidney Gravy

Recipe by June Marshall

(From the Mvskoke Hompetv Encokv, a recipe booklet from Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Staff)

Backstory

My mother, Mary (recently celebrated her 82nd birthday. Mom is full-blood Kiowa and has lived most of her life in Fort Cobb, Oklahoma. As a child, I remember eating everything mom cooked and placed in front of us. Her fried chicken, yeast rolls, brown beans, green corn bread, kidney gravy, Spanish rice, cornmeal mush, and raisin pie were just a few of the dishes she made that were absolutely delicious!

MFSI Executive Director Vicky Karhu and I went to a McAlester meat processing plant to pick up a grass-fed steer that was processed for us. Vicky and I divided the meat, so now our freezers are full of good beef. Some of the cuts were the liver and kidney. I recall mom making kidney gravy which was the kidney cut in small pieces and made with gravy. She learned how to make that dish by watching her mother make it. Mom also said her grandmother used to cook it over coals by placing the meat in a small grill. The following is mom's recipe. Note: Not only is kidney a delicacy, but it is rich in iron, protein, vitamin A, thiamine, riboflavin, phosphorous, and other nutrients.

Kidney Gravy

Cut kidney in half and clean it. Slice into ¼" pieces. Fry in small amount of oil until it is done. Mom said it is done when you cut into it, no blood comes out. Next, pour flour over the kidney and stir. Use black pepper to taste. Mom said the more black better the better it is. Brown the flour, add water, and stir. Cook until the gravy is done. This will serve four. "Yum Oh!" as Rachael Ray says.

Boiled Raisins Loaf

Recipe by Pearl Thomas

(From the Mvskoke Hompetv Encokv, a recipe booklet from Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Staff)

Submitted by Pearl Thomas who shared her mother's (Peggy Chalakee) recipe that is over 40 years old. Pearl said her mother used to work at Ball Brothers years ago and the ladies would share recipes. We appreciate her submitting this recipe for all to try.

Bring to a boil:
1 cup shortening
2 cups sugar
2 cups water
2 cups raisins
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon allspice
½ teaspoon cloves

Let cool for a few minutes. Add 1 teaspoon soda and 3 cups of flour. Mix well. Pour in a greased and floured pan. Bake in 350 degree oven until done. This cake is very moist.

SPOON BREAD

Recipe by Rita Williams

(From the Mvskoke Hompetv Encokv, a recipe booklet from Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Staff)

This recipe was shared verbally by Creek Elder Susie Monday who is now deceased. Susie and I worked out the measurements considering cookbooks were not used but just through memory of how her mother cooked.

1 cup milk (morning cow's milk)
½ cup water (water fresh from the mountain spring)
2 tsp sugar
¼ tsp salt
½ cup yellow or white cornmeal (freshly ground)
1 large egg yolk (gathered from your chicken house)
½ tsp baking powder (a rare commodity in the old days)
1/8 tsp cayenne pepper (a new ingredient added, optional)
3 large egg whites (an added ingredient that helps to make bread light and smooth)

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. In a large saucepan, bring the milk, water, sugar and salt to a simmer over moderate heat. Remove from the heat, stir in the cornmeal, and beat the mixture with a spoon until it is thick and smooth.

2. In a small bowl, lightly beat the egg yolk with the baking powder. Add to the cornmeal mixture in the saucepan along with the cayenne pepper.

3. In a large bowl, beat the egg whites until they are stiff but not dry. Stir ¼ of the whites into the cornmeal mixture, then gently fold in the rest. Coat a 1 quart baking dish with the cooking spray and pour in the batter. Bake for 30 minutes to 35 minutes or until the bread is puffed and golden brown. Serve at once from the pan. Serves 4.

Children's artwork from MFSI Cookbook. Photo courtesy of MFSI.

Delicious Squash Pie

Recipe by Unknown

(From the Mvskoke Hompetv Encokv, a recipe booklet from Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Staff)

1 cup sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. nutmeg
½ tsp. mace
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. ginger
1 Tbsp. cornstarch
2 cups strained squash
3 egg yolks
2 cups milk
1 unbaked pastry shell or your own pie crust

Mix dry ingredients until there are no lumps; add squash and mix thoroughly. Beat egg yolks until light; add to squash mixture. Add milk and mix well; pour into unbaked pastry shell. Bake in 400 degree oven for 10 minutes; reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake until done.

Children's artwork from MFSI Cookbook. Photo courtesy of MFSI.

Fried Squash Blossoms

Recipe by Rita Williams

(From the Mvskoke Hompetv Encokv, a recipe booklet from Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Staff)

I tried this recipe and it is very good. Be sure to pick the male blossoms. You can also use pumpkin blossoms the same way.

½ or more squash blossoms
½ cup flour
¼ cup buttermilk
½ cup cornmeal

Gather squash blossoms early in the morning while wide open. Rinse in cool water several times and leave in water until ready to fry. Mix flour and buttermilk together; dip blossoms into flour mixture, then into cornmeal. Fry in deep fat until golden brown.

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Additional Resources

Traditional Foods Program - Native Diabetes Wellness Program
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
www.cdc.gov/diabetes/projects/ndwp/traditional-foods.htm

Native American Foods & Health Program - First Nations Development Institute
http://firstnations.org/programs/foods-health

National Indian Health Board
www.nihb.org/public_health/ndwp.php

Indian Health Service - Division of Diabetes Treatment & Prevention
www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Diabetes/

American Indian Institute - University of Oklahoma
www.aii.ou.edu

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Wigômin i
Kayhikhigâwôk!
Stories are seeds that
sustain the People...
Wâmi skitôpâk!