Native Farm to School
A Project of First Nations Development Institute

HARVESTING AND COLLABORATING WITH NATIVE COMMUNITY PARTNERS
OUR MISSION

First Nations Development Institute invests in and creates innovative institutions and models that strengthen asset control and support economic development for American Indian people and their communities.
All attendees will be **muted** throughout this webinar.

**If you have questions**, please use the **Q&A button** and enter your question(s) in the box.

**Audio Settings**: Change your audio settings. You can also click the upward arrow (^^) next to change your speaker.

**Chat**: Send a message to the panelists or everyone (All Panelists and Attendees) in the webinar.

**Q&A**: Ask questions to the host and panelists or request technical help.
INTRODUCTIONS

Aaron Lowden
Program Coordinator
Ancestral Lands

Brian Giles
Special Education Teacher
Indian Township at Peter Dana Point

Mary Adelzadeh
Consultant
First Nations Development Institute
POLL 1

How has a partnership supported your program in the past?

A. Increase knowledge/expertise
B. Improve cultural relevancy
C. Engage community
D. Increase capacity (get more done)
E. Mentoring
F. Increase access to community resource
G. Increase financial resources
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SHOWCASING NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROJECT: ANCESTRAL LANDS
Aaron Lowden, Ancestral Lands Program Coordinator, is from the Pueblo of Acoma. He is a life-long farmer, land-based skills instructor, seed care-taker and has been leading the effort in Acoma Pueblo to restore the traditional food systems of the community. Aaron has been a student of the traditions of Acoma, being mentored by his mother and uncles who were raised in the self-sustenance lifestyle. Aaron has dedicated his life to re-vitalizing these ways. Aaron and Ancestral Lands’ agri-Cultural efforts are achieved through an experiential and holistic program called the Acoma Farm Corps, where local youth learn field preparation and design; dryland, irrigated, and drip irrigation techniques; seed selection, saving, and banking; and traditional food preparation. Every component of the program is contextualized through the traditional haak’umeh world view to pass on the place-based knowledge of Acoma. Aaron established a community seed bank that currently holds 57 indigenous varieties of corn, squash, beans, tobacco, gourds, melons, and chile. All of these are available free of charge to community members and other local indigenous groups.
ANCESTRAL LANDS

Ancestral Lands engages Native youth and young adults in meaningful conservation projects on Native Lands. With programs in Acoma Pueblo, Navajo Nation, Zuni Pueblo, Hopi Pueblo, and Albuquerque. Ancestral Lands crews have been working on projects from historical preservation, traditional agriculture, chainsaw crews, hiking clubs, stream restoration, fencing, trail construction, and more. The Ancestral Lands program also aims to incorporate traditional culture and language as part of crew lifestyle and project work.
remembering who we are
We operate on the foundational culture-based core value that everything has a life. In sowing the seeds in the land we are creating new life that we view literally as our children. With every seed we commune with creation and ask ‘iiyaatra paatuuni’ which means ‘may the children grow’.

Children need love, care, attention and nourishment. As the corn grows through its life cycle of creation, youth, adulthood, and old age we see ourselves in our seed and are able to care for it as such.
1932-35 Established by US Government
Bluewater Lake for recreation and agriculture
Milan “Carrot Capital of the US”
Grants began as a railroad camp in the 1880s
Uranium milling operations began in 1958 under a license issued by the Atomic Energy Commission

Grants “Uranium Capital of the World” now reliant of prison industry
Horrace 11 CFS to 2-3 CFS now cubic ft p sec
Uranium extraction dried up Ojo de Gallo and various other springs along the Rio San Jose
Homestake Superfund Site
Rain or flood water overfills water treatment
WHAT CHANGED? WHAT HAPPENED THROUGH THAT CHANGE?

- Western Re-education and cultural genocide (Boarding school area, modern equipment and engineering)
- Exploitation and destruction of soils and ecosystems
- Capitalistic centralized/Industrialized agriculture
- Loss of traditional ecological knowledge
- Loss of climate adapted land-race seeds
- Displacement and disassociation from ancestral lands and waters (damming of streams and rivers, forced removal from ancestral lands, government housing)
- Economic development
- Loss of food security and self-sustaining communities
- Loss of community wide physical, mental and spiritual health
- Monopolization and privatization of seed
“THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR FOOD AND MEDICINE IS THE TASTE”

Underlying health issues” in the time of COVID

Early death=devastating culture loss

Food desert (AKA Food Apartheid)

❖ Food Justice- Farmers often do not have a livable income. Much of the efforts tied to production are often associated with profit as opposed to sustenance. Much of the food sold for profit is sold to those outside of our communities because our community members usually lack the financial resources to equitably compensate the farmer. Food Sovereignty ought to be rooted in sustenance for the community’s benefit as well as the passing of the traditional knowledge and seeds we hold.

Gate Keeping Access to land, water, seed, and knowledge
ABOUT FARM CORPS:

❖ Based in Acoma we recruit young people from Acoma ages 17 to 25 years old
❖ 6 month terms through the growing season
❖ Only heirloom seeds from local indigenous communities are used
❖ Traditional irrigated and Dryland methods are taught and practiced
❖ Member are compensated with a weekly living stipend and education award
SEED CARE TAKING

❖ “seed is the source of life, is the source of renewal of life...this is where life gets renewed in perpetuality” - Vandana Shiva
❖ Our seeds are the legacy of our ancestors
❖ Preserve special cultivars that took centuries to create
❖ Preserve traits that allow for traditional recipes and diets
❖ Those that have seed control the world’s food supply
❖ Seeds = liberation from capitalism and institutional racism
❖ Food Security: share seeds with other families and provide for community
❖ Restore a healthy relationship with our plant relatives
❖ Healthy and nourishing communal practice that aids our mental, physical and spiritual health
Senior Center Hoop House
Collaboration between Acoma Learning Center (ALC), Ancestral Lands (AL), Haak’u Community Academy (HCA)

Distributed 15 raised bed gardens (lumber, compost, and joints), seed from AL Seed Bank, starter plants, and hoses to students of the HCA.
Distribution and Building
sraunatrapa howba
Indigenized Diets
Although it is tainted with fear of the invisible and reality of inaccessible resources
Only in my dreams have I seen so many of the haanu re-learning our life ways with fields from Acomita to Anzac.
As we romanticize these practices remember, it will be difficult.
Your muscles will ache
sweat and dust will cake your arms and head
your skin will turn red and brown.

Embrace it.

Our bodies will be blessed to blended with soil
Our mouths will be parched like the cracked earth and we will all yearn for raindrops like our mother in the middle summer
You will know the meaning of centuries of prayer, song and sacrifice soaked into the land
You will know the energy that's filled the atmosphere since we emerged and took our first breath
As the blades of hoe and shovel meet the ground, our muscles will tighten around blood and bone
As our ancestral DNA remembers what it’s like to work so hard for food
Commit these lessons of land, water, and plant life to memory

As you harvest, Burn the memory so far deep your grand children’s children follow suit when they encounter struggle.
So that they will guard and protect it all with the Ferocity of 1680
So that they will return to the land
So that they will return to themselves
THANK YOU!

Aaron Lowden
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POLL 2

Which new partner would you prioritize for your program?

A. Tribe
B. Non-profit
C. Business
D. Producers
E. University
F. 4-H
G. Community groups
BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS IN NATIVE FARM TO SCHOOL
Brian Giles pronouns are he/him. I work at Indian Township School at Peter Dana Point in Indian Township. I currently hold the position of special education teacher in grades 6-8. I am also the Food Corps Supervisor, after school garden coordinator, and sit on the school’s orchard, pond, and garden planning committee. I have worked in special education for almost ten years primarily with children with emotional and behavioral disturbances. More importantly I have been an active member of both the culture and community of the Passamaquoddy people for the majority of my life. I am a homesteader. I live in a solar powered house my partner Susan and I built on sixty beautiful acres in Maine. We try to raise our own two children as close to the land as we can. We spend our time gardening, doing chores, hiking, bird watching, and foraging. The winter months are spent burning the wood we cut from the land and boiling the sap we tap from the trees. I love family, my children and the land. As a teacher I try to share those same values with the children I work with. I have learned that in order to be an effective teacher and more importantly a member of this community one must open your heart and embrace each child as one’s own. That being said, I share the same enthusiasm for sustainability, self-reliance, health, the garden, the woods, and the environment with the children at school that I do with my own children at home. I harbor a strong desire to bring the hopes of our planet to the forefront of our student’s minds and help them to realize that they can attain self-reliance and philanthropy simultaneously through education in ecology and agriculture.
Indian Township School serves approximately 145 children on the Passamaquoddy Reservation known as Motahkomikuk or Indian Township. The school is committed to the education of the children with an emphasis on their heritage and culture.
It has been recognized for the school orchard, pond project, and their significance in creating a healthy environmental and community culture!

Kuli kisehtal tipah!
DAWNA MEADER-YORK
THE FOUNDER OF THE GARDEN
LIBRARIAN
GEDAKINA PROJECT COORDINATOR

Dawna Meader-York is a Passamaquoddy tribal member and the individual responsible for the very first school garden. Since its creation, she has been an integral part of all levels of growth of the garden program and has been a diligent supporter of a native garden curriculum to be instituted school wide.
LANGUAGE INTEGRATION IS CRUCIAL TO A CONNECTION WITH THE TRADITIONAL WAYS OF FORAGING, GARDENING, AND EATING.
NUHSUWAPHOT OTUHK, MECIMI-TE TETT KTALAQAP!
WHEN YOU HUNT A DEER, YOU ALWAYS LOOK THIS WAY!
For children, time in the soil and the forest is a transformative experience. The children pictured here have families who have hunted and farmed this land for more than 10,000 years. The connection is immutable.
Janet Lola has been a partner to the programs that happen at the school for as long as it has existed. Janet maintains community gardens and assists the school with gardening projects. In turn, the students help to maintain seedling for the community gardens. Janet is an inspiration to the whole community and gives of her self endlessly to ensure everyone is well fed. It is an honor to have her as an ally to our program.

JANET LOLA
PASSAMAQUODDY TRIBAL MEMBER
FOOD PANTRY COORDINATOR
Pictured here is Jarrod Guillette, he was the science teacher working with some students on an after school biology and mineral lesson. The integration of gardening in the classroom is a valuable asset to all students but especially students with high levels of trauma and other special learning needs.
Organizations like Re-Tree Us here in Maine have proved us with hands on experience, materials, and continued check in to ensure that our school is not just having a one off experience. Many of the children who planted these trees will not see them fruit in their school career but took great pride in knowing they were planting an orchard for the future of their community.

http://www.retreeus.org
This legacy project will serve as an example for future generations.

The 8th grade class of 2020 designed the pond and established its placement in the orchard.
KOLUWOT NIT WEN ELLUHKET ETOLOKEHKIMUT WASIS.
IT’S SO IMPORTANT WHAT ONE DOES WHEN CHILDREN ARE LEARNING

Pictured here is Samantha Cottone. She was the first Food Corps Service member I had the pleasure of working with. Having a service member on board is an invaluable asset. The infrastructure that was prepared, the connections that were made, and the lessons that were shared have shaped the entire schools view of agriculture and healthy foods.

Food Corps is currently working with an advisory panel to ensure the best service in indigenous settings to honor the people they serve. Food Corps has a motto “We come in servitude not saviorism”.

https://foodcorps.org
Pictured here in the background is Tribal Council Member Wade Lola. The Tribal Council and the Sokom (Chief) are tremendous supporters of agriculture in the school setting. When asked for assistance, they have brought every resource that could be spared to help us build a pond, orchard fence, and to repair greenhouses and build raised beds. Their support are crucial to our programs success.
MOCCOKIPTI NEHL!
SHE/HE/THEY GETS THEIR HANDS DIRTY!
I am thankful to all.

We are grateful for the partners we work with in locally, in our state, and across the Indigenous nations of Turtle Island that includes:
The short list includes; all the area businesses and private donors, the chief William Nicholas, the tribal council, school board, the superintendent Linda Mcleod, past principal Matthew Harvey and current principal Jane Smith, Wabanaki Health, FoodCorps, Maine Ag in the Classroom, Maine School Garden Network, Re-Tree Us, Maine Math and Science Alliance, Intertribal Agricultural Council, the Indigenous Farm to Cafeteria Cohort, Janet Lola (Food Pantry). SNAP, Healthy Acadia, and of course the staff, Dawna Meader-York Librarian and school garden founder, Brenda Dana Lozada, and Regina Nicholas who are the cultural language teachers at Indian Township School who are forever jumping on board with our ecology adventures!
One of the most exciting aspects of gardening is watching the children who struggle in the classroom becomes leaders outdoors. The love and attention this boy paid to every seedling was truly remarkable to watch.
NEWICUWON
IT FLOWS IN FOUR DIRECTIONS

On of the goals of our gardening program is to honor the traditional ways and to include the modern techniques at the same time. That integration is crucial to a program that will prepare our students for the future in high schools off of the reservation and protect the knowledge of their culture.
On of the goals of our gardening program is to honor the traditional ways and to include the modern techniques at the same time. That integration is crucial to a program that will prepare our students for the future in high schools off of the reservation and protect the knowledge of their culture.
Pictured here you can see Richard Hodges of Re-Tree Us and Allie Cook who was our second Food Corps Service Member. Allie was vital to the growth of the program.
MECIMEW
THE WAY IT USED TO BE

The Three Sisters Garden of Abenaki Calais Flint Corn, Jacobs Ladder Beans, and Summer Squash provided enough food for several families in the community. There were several late night raids of the garden...
SO WE DOUBLED THE GARDEN SIZE!
Every student of all levels is given the responsibility in the garden. Every student takes ownership of the project.
WOLITAHASU
HE/SHE/THEY
ARE HAPPY
WE HAVE RECEIVED BOTH LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL ATTENTION FOR OUR PROGRAM. THE STUDENTS ARE LEARNING AND THEY ARE BEING RECOGNIZED FOR IT. IT BRINGS GREAT PRIDE TO THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.
Guest speakers have included elders who discussed traditional food ways as well as vermicompost specialist.

http://www.wormmainea.com
TUTULUHKE
HE/SHE/THEY WORK VERY HARD
SUNKEWOP!
BEHAVE!
KULI KISEHT QOSS!
YOU DID A GOOD THING MY BOY!
'KOSHAPAMOL
HE/SHE/THEY
FOCUS!
When you can’t garden you might as well ice fish!

A well rounded program should focus on not just the garden at school but also on traditional foraging and hunting. Ice fishing, maple syrup production, preparing fruit leather, and visiting local deer yards, and preparing animal hides are all part of the school wide initiative to connect with the local ecology.
MEEA 2019 SCHOOL OF THE YEAR!

Our hard work has paid off, as we were chosen as the 2019 State of Maine School of the Year for Environmental Education by the Maine Environmental Education Association.
KCI WOLIWON!
THANK YOU SO MUCH!

The Support of our leaders has been crucial to our success!
NATIONAL RECOGNITION FEELS PRETTY SWEET!
BEING CHOSEN AS ONE OF THE INTERTRIBAL AGRICULTURAL CHAMPIONS WAS AN INCREDIBLY BIG DEAL! WE WERE GOING TO HAVE A MASSIVE CEREMONY IN THE SPRING...
COVID-19 has made this growing and gardening season a difficult one. The reservation is closed to all outside residents and I was worried the school garden would be a lost cause...
INDIAN TOWNSHIP DID EVERYTHING IT COULD TO PROTECT THE PASSAMAQUODDY PEOPLE.
The school gardens continue to produce food for the community. In the absence of the school staff, community members stepped up to assist Janet and Dawna in maintaining the gardens. A critical volunteer was Geo Neptune.
Geo Neptune is a renowned basket maker and a youth educator. Geo is also the proud parent to a wonderful duck named Myrtle (notice the roof here). Geo was a huge help this spring distributing seedlings to folks around the community and providing support to Janet. Community helps the project continue.
In spite of the break we have had due to Covid-19 we will be returning and we will continue to build an environmental approach to learning that will offer real nutritional, spiritual, and cultural significance to our students. Kci Woliwon for your time.
THANK YOU!

Brian Giles
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS IN THE Q&A BOX
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The recorded webinar can be accessed on our website under the First Nations Knowledge Center at
https://www.firstnations.org/fnk
STAY TUNED FOR ADDITIONAL WEBINARS IN THE SERIES COMING IN JANUARY 2021!

**Webinar Series Questions?**

Contact: Leiloni Begaye at lbegaye@firstnations.org

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AHE’HEE
YAW^KO
THANK YOU!