

MVSKOKE FOOD

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative



Little Tihen Williams is learning about gardening as she transplants butternut squash. She is already a good, hard worker at age three.

Monthly Events

www.mvskokefood.org

May 3rd

Wetumka Indian Community Center
MFSI to work with elders to make a Salsa garden growing tomatoes and bell peppers for porch garden. Contact: Chairperson Jennie Lillard at Wetumka ICC, 918-814-1656

MCN FFPC Meeting
MFSI Office - 3 pm

May 4th

Okmulgee Farmers' Market
Opening day of the 2012 season of the Okmulgee Farmers' Market. The Okmulgee Farmers' Market will be held every Tuesday and Friday 8 am - 1pm

May 10th

Natural Resources Day
MFSI will participate and work with Okmulgee County Conservation District at Natural Resource Day at Deep Fork NWR at Cussetah Bottoms. Theme: Connecting Youth With Nature Through Learning Outdoor Skills. MFSI to do a segment on "foraging and natural harvesting." Stephanie Berryhill will be lead on this and all staff will participate with her. NRCS Contact: Rhnea Stoy, 918-756-8111.

May Event

Presentation on Growing Flowers
Stephanie Berryhill to work with the Girl Scouts troop at Mason School. Stephanie is to make a presentation on growing flowers (mammoth sunflowers) for the troop. May event.

Mother's Day, May 13 2012

Dacey Barnett
Office Assistant

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative pays tribute to all Mothers on a very special day – May 13.

Everyone that is blessed with a surviving Mother must be thankful that you still have time to honor and respect her as if every day is Mother's Day. If she wants to just talk, be attentive to her and listen to what she has to say.

The Mothers and Grandmothers of today are in the forefront and are the backbone of most families; and they have the deep unconditional love for their children and grandchildren.

Cetske vcayecet momen vnokecet omakvtce. I remind all to take care of your Mother, hold her dearest to your heart and let her know how much you love her because those of us that do not have our Mothers yearn for their presence, love, and wisdom.



Richard Buckley, Local Farmer & Farm-Property Manager

H. June Marshall
Community Coordinator

MFSI would like for you to meet one of our farmers and ranchers from the community of Thlopthlocco Tribal Town in Okemah - Richard Buckley. Richard is the farm-property manager who has happily been doing this job for the past ten years. Richard's love of farming goes way back to his childhood when his mom, Fannie McNac Buckley, introduced farm animals and gardening to her nine children when they were very young. Naturally, Richard became involved in 4-H as he worked with the farm animals: sheep, chickens, cattle, pigs, and horses. Note: 4-H prepares young people to step up to the challenges in their community and the world using research-based programming around positive youth development; 4-H youth get the hands-on real world experience they need to become leaders. www.4-H.com.

Richard's education included Seneca Boarding School up to the seventh grade, then Weleetka High School where he graduated, and Haskell Indian Junior College with a degree in refrigeration/air conditioning in 1973. While in high school in Weleetka, he was a track star and set a shot put record at a track meet event in Wynnewood that probably still stands today – 52' 6".

His love of the land inspires him to be the best while working the 2,400 acres that comprise the Tribal Town. Forty acres is waiting to be planted with watermelons and sweet corn that will be used to feed the tribal township members. Cattle and hay production are ongoing projects, but crop production is next. Soil testing is on the lists of things to be done! Buckley is correct in wanting to know the soil. Kerr Center training stressed the importance of feeding the soil because the soil must be nurtured within, and only testing will let the farmer know about the soil. The land has fencing but more work needs to be done in this area. Additional clearing of the land is underway, and weeds are being eradicated. The land has pecan trees scattered throughout that can be a means of food production. Buckley stated he learned to cook while at Seneca, and he knows how fresh fruits and vegetables picked directly from the garden and brought to the table are healthier and tastier than foods purchased from the local grocery stores. He can also make Creek traditional dishes. Buckley is a proud father of three and grandfather of five. His vision for the township is on agriculture, being productive in cattle, hay, and crops.

MFSI Today

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Oklahoma Tribes Hold Fast to Water Treaty Rights

Rita Williams, Policy Coordinator

There are many battles still being fought by tribal nations, but they are not on the battlefields where many of our relatives' blood were spilled. Now, they are in the courts of law in defense of broken treaties and broken promises for permanent homelands after a forced removal from the only homelands known to tribes.

The Choctaws and Chickasaws are facing the day they have tried to avoid with the state of Oklahoma through several unsuccessful years of attempts to establish the government-to-government negotiations with the state to resolve water issues. Stephen Greetham, counsel for the Chickasaw Nation stated, "The Chickasaw and Choctaw Nation hold treaties with the United States that secure prior and paramount rights to the ownership and management of water resources throughout their territory," "The Nations' treaties secured them a permanent homeland, and without the sustainable and long-term management of its water resources, that homeland will be undermined."

According to Choctaw Nation attorney Bob Rabon, "For decades, the Tribal Nations have been in the wilderness waving their message that State and

Oklahoma City, are making decisions about our property. We need to be considered but the message has been ignored."

The Chickasaw and Choctaw nation filed legal action in the U.S District Court in Oklahoma City to protect the tribe's water resources.

Arizona politicians seek to extinguish Navajo and Hopi Water Rights: Senators Jon Kyl (R-AZ) and John McCain (R-AZ) visit Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribal leaders to give up their people's aboriginal and Treaty-guaranteed priority Water Rights by accepting a "Settlement Agreement" written to benefit some of the West's most powerful mining and energy corporations.

According to Ed Bencenti - Censored News, Senators Kyl and McCain know well that without water, life is impossible; yet, their Bill and the Settlement Agreement close the door forever to any possibility of irrigated agriculture and water conservation projects. This means no projects to heal and restore Navajo and Hopi watersheds(keeping sediment from filling downstream reservoirs) to grow high-value income and employment-producing livestock and crops for Navajo, Hopi and external markets; and to provide once again for healthy, diabetes and

obesity free nutrition and active lifestyles for all future generations of Navajo and Hopi children.

Given everything our Tribal Nations have gone through since the invasion of the Europeans, it seems our battles have always been about the land our people possess and now the water that runs through it. The battles haven't changed, only the playing field has. One element that remains strong and intact is the spirit of our native people to rise to occasion when summoned by voices of our ancestors to protect their rights as native people.

I recall a time when my father, who is now deceased, was pressed with an issue on his land. He was a full-blood Creek and tried to find good in everything. An oil well company had drilled on his land and left a large amount of salt water spill that damaged the soil. They promised to clean it up and never did. He went to the BIA and it fell on deaf ears. After seeing his discouragement, we encouraged a lawsuit. He relented and finally gave in. To make a long story short, when my father was called on the stand, he was nervous and spoke so humbly in his broken English and said, "I don't own a lot, I don't want money, all I have is my land, so I ask, just do what is right by my land." He won his case.

Local Church Investing in Gardening

H. June Marshall
Community Coordinator

Newtown United Methodist Church located off West Eufaula Street in Okmulgee is in its second year of planting a garden. Last year, the garden was somewhat productive but the drought kept it from being fully productive. This year the garden was moved to another location that is closer to a water source, and after tilling, the planting began. The church planted tomatoes, two kinds of peppers, squash, okra, zucchini, corn, beans, potatoes, two kinds of onions, and cucumbers. Darryl Wall, Trustee of the church, stated that the vegetables will help supplement the foods that are served at their first Saturday of the month breakfast. Watch the Okmulgee newspaper for the advertisement of this breakfast. Watering and pulling weeds is their next adventure in maintaining the garden. We will keep you posted on their journey.

Right: Tomatoes growing at
Newtown UMC



Above: Newtown Corn has been planted using a traditional method -- several seeds planted in a small mound.



Food Labeling Workshop, April 24th - 25th, 2012

H. June Marshall
Community Coordinator

Great two days in Stillwater at OSU attending the Food Labeling Workshop held at the Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center (FAPC). This was a big class of about twenty-five with excellent presenters from the *Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the FAPC. The training provided the participants with developing nutritional labeling and ingredients statements and information about FDA food labeling regulations and other related subjects to the regulated industry, particularly small businesses and startups. Topics discussed at the workshop included; (1) Mandatory label elements, (2) Nutrition labeling requirements, (3) Health and nutrition claims, (4) Food

Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004, and (5) Special labeling issues such as exemptions. The Food and Agricultural Products Center promotes economic development in the food and agri-business industries in Oklahoma. MFSI recently sent ten local farmers and ranchers to one of the FAPC's many workshops, "Basic Training." This Basic Training workshop introduced participants to issues through business planning, market identification, strategies, and explanations of food processing regulations. Participants receive handouts, resources, and networking opportunities.

*The FDA is responsible for assuring that foods sold in the United States are safe, wholesome and properly labeled. This applies to foods produced domestically, as well as foods from foreign countries. The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C) and the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act are the Federal laws governing food products under FDA's jurisdiction. (<http://www.fda.gov/FoodLabelingGuide>)



MFSI seeks to support tribal food growers with educational resources

Stephanie Berryhill, Cultural Preservation/Cultural Food Policy Specialist

OKMULGEE – Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative (MFSI) is currently looking for Mvskoke tribal community members that are interested in producing food for the purpose of feeding their families and community members.

MFSI seeks to help community members grow and provide food through offering training and educational resources in areas such as building healthy soil and food production, including storage and processing.

MFSI supports food production ideas and interests, big and small, and encourages participation from people who have varying degrees of experience -- from beginners to experienced farmers and ranchers.

Areas of training broadly include: growing food, including the management of fruit-bearing trees, shrubs, and edible plants on wooded lands, and raising livestock.

MFSI's primary goal, under its partnership with the Kerr Center Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program, is to promote and support the development of financially viable farms at the operational levels of individual, family, and community or small group. MFSI would like to offer Mvskoke tribal communities, including ceremonial grounds, tribal towns, churches, and tribally chartered community centers this opportunity to gain skills in producing food.

For more information, contact June Marshall, Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Project Manager, at (918) 756-5918 or visit Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative at 100 E. 7th, Suite 101, in Okmulgee.



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100 E. 7th, Suite 101, Okmulgee, OK 74447

<http://www.mvskokefood.org>

More Events in May

May 8th:

Oklahoma City Policy Council Meeting
OSU-OKC Campus in Oklahoma City 2:00 pm - 3:30 p.m.

May 16th:

St. Crispins, Seminole, OK
Adult Diabetes Camp - Gardening techniques and traditional foods

May 29th:

MFSI will host a Compost Class with Eufaula/Checotah Indian Community Garden Manager Richard Belcher, Tues., May 29, 6 p.m. at the MFSI Offices, located at 100 E. 7th St., Ste. 101, Okmulgee, OK 74447. There will also be a compost demonstration on-site. Belcher attends the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program and will share what he has learned through Kerr Center with attendees along with his gardening experiences. Reservations are encouraged. RSVP soon at 918-756-5915.

MFSI OFFICE

MVSKOKE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
INITIATIVE

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Office Hours:
M - F 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

MFSI Staff are here to help you. Please
feel free to stop in and visit.

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