

MVSKOKE FOOD

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative



Harvesting Pecans

Harvesting for farmers doesn't end with summer vegetables, it extends throughout fall and into winter. Hunters and gatherers look to all seasons for signs of edible foods to consume and preserve.

Barton Williams and his grandchildren started harvesting pecans, the first of winter. Wild Onions were being picked as early as October and November according to the weather and persimmons, sassafras, and nuts were ready. Not too long ago, Fall was also the time to prepare for putting up meat. But now we have freezers to keep meat, so some of us put away beef and pork any time. Our elders say they would keep meat by frying it in the fall and preserving it in the animal's grease in a container for winter. On a cold winter's morning, they would have fresh ham or bacon with biscuits.

Soon we will be eating wild onions again, as the seasons change and the sun begins to warm the earth, we will begin to see signs of lambs quarters, poke salad and other edible plants.

As years go by, time changes many things around the farm and ranch. Right now I am getting ready to order my garden seeds online, our grandparents used to save them in sacks, jars, any way they could for the next year. If you have a story to share about your family on the farm or gathering, please send in your stories. Thanks, Rita Williams.

February 2nd, 2013

Oklahoma Natives: Plants and People, Oklahoma Native Plant Society, Tulsa Garden Center, 9 am-3 pm

February 4th, 2013

Okmulgee County Wellness Coalition Healthy Lifestyles Committee meeting, 12 noon, Okmulgee Health Department

February 8th, 2013

IHCRC Eagle Play, Park Elementary School, Tulsa, 3-5 pm

February 9th, 2013

Beginning Farmers and Rancher Livestock Training, Poteau, all day

February 13th, 2013

MCN Food & Fitness Policy Council, MFSI, 3-4 PM

January 17th - February 14th, 2013

Northeast Oklahoma Beekeepers Assn. offering beekeeping training, Starting Right With Bees, every Thursday, Tulsa County OSU Extension Office, 4116 E. 15th Street, Tulsa, [918.852.3128](tel:918.852.3128). \$75

February 23rd, 2013

Canning Class, Glenpool Indian Community Center, 10:30 am

MFSI Today

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Well another year has come and gone, and if you are like me 2012 held both good and bad times. Disappointments, heart aches and trouble are all part of life and the growth process while we are here on earth. I am so glad that those times are off-set by all the good things that come our way: a new birth, a good crop of anything out of our gardens, a smile from one of our elders, a drink of cold water on a hot day, an unexpected shower, the gathering of family and friends. These things remind me that it is the little things that add up to a happy existence.

It's been said that "no man is an island". Separation from other humans are not good for spirit and soul, we need each other. Sure we all have our faults and blemishes but at the end of the day, it's good to know that we can call someone, a neighbor, a church member, a relative, or sometimes a complete stranger to assist us when life challenges come our way. And we find ourselves being thankful for those times.

I am thankful for the people at MFSI. Each one of them has a caring heart and are truly interested in our people and preserving our environment for future generations. We do not borrow this earth from past generations, but it is on loan from our children and their children's children. The things we do now to educate ourselves regarding sustainable resources, clean water, and healthy life styles will leave a great legacy for generations to come.

We all make New Year's resolutions, mine for 2013 is to be more disciplined in what I eat, become more active, and remember I'm borrowing from future generations the land and resources I will use. We are responsible to our children for teaching them how to use Mother Earth and how to leave it for future generations. We at MFSI make this an obligation for ourselves and work to educate others regarding this vital allegiance to our environment.

We invite you to learn more about our work and get involved with us regarding our healthy futures. We are dedicated to you to assist in that effort.

May we all have a prosperous and healthy 2013!

Darrell Fox, Executive Director
Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Joins in Solidarity with “Idle No More”

Rita Williams
Policy Coordinator

Indian Nations across America have been fighting colonization since encroachment of other countries seeking out the “New World” along with the their mentality to conquer and dominant ideology that justifies the social, political and economic status quo as natural, inevitable, perpetual and beneficial for everyone benefiting only the ruling class.

Our movement in the Food world deals with our native people’s right to live a long healthy life through planting and harvesting our food from the earth. We are reviving our culture to be care takers of Mother Earth once again by growing healthy foods with the understanding of the nutritional values that will help to sustain our people from life threatening diseases that continue to plaque our people.

We are always learning and growing in knowledge from Mother Earth. We depend upon her to feed us and to help us have a good harvest, but we cannot always control Mother Nature so we learn to look, listen and learn from the environmental changes we have experienced with drought the last two years. . The earth, rivers, creeks, lakes, ponds, industries, homes, growing seasons, etc., rely upon water to sustain humans, the food we eat, the growth of hay and grass for animals, livestock, insects, Plants, birds, desert and woodland creatures. Water is a

spiritual significance to the native people as well as life sustaining for our survival.

Today, many tribes are experiencing again, the encroachment of dominant ideology through lawmakers to justify the means for the good of all people, they say, and again it’s about development and the water that flows through tribal lands, with continued disregard of Native Treaty Rights and the Indian Act.

In solidarity with all Indian Nations we continue to lift you in prayer for all who continue to deal with broken treaty rights, the struggles and fights will not be in vain, if you stay the course. Just as we look to our growing seasons, the ups and the downs, drought, heat, laboring in the trenches, and enjoying the times we have a good harvest, never forgetting the focus of our labor is not for self, but a multitude of native peoples. We look to our local farmers and ranchers, to help us understand how to work in harmony with our harsh season, we look to our tribal elders and grass roots people to show us the way to stay strong and pursue endurance, when to speak and to be silent, when to have patience and when to move, and to be as cunning as your pursuer in all things we strive to achieve.

MVTO for your work.

Why Hunger Visits Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative

Rita Williams
Policy Coordinator

In 2006, the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative received a three year Community Food Project grant from USDA/CREES. The purpose of the grant was to grow healthy communities within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation through a community garden that would learn all methods of growing, learning, preserving, and teaching how to farm the earth to grow healthy foods for community people. (cont. page 4)



Horticulture Seminars when held in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The three-year pilot project included one rural community and one urban community all learning at the same time to grow foods from seeding to planting, building a greenhouse and hoop house and learning how to construct it. The community hired a Community Food Project manager who was responsible for the community garden, involving volunteers to assist with the garden, maintaining the garden at all times, using their own farm equipment and supplies to work the garden. During this time, the communities would receive training from experienced growers, teachers, OSU Extension agencies, field trips with the Kerr center and attended trainings at the Lane Center, as well as the National

After the grant ended, the project is still continuing. Wilson Community was able to build a greenhouse and a hoop house located near the community garden on private property and is still maintained with those who first started. Eufaula/ on private Wilson area has Nutrition vegetables and Richard Belcher training has now plants.



private property started. Eufaula/ on private Wilson area has Nutrition vegetables and Richard Belcher training has now plants.

Recently, Rita Williams the policy coordinator for Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative and former Community Food Project Director for the grant was contacted by David Hanson, Freelance Writer who is working with the National Organization, "Why Hunger," in regards to former grantees of the Community Food Project to share our grassroots work on the level of growing healthy food with some of our successes and lessons learned by interviewing a couple of our creek citizens, Barton Williams, former rural pilot project manager, and Lou Fixico, Manager, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Elderly Nutrition Program.

"I came to Oklahoma's Green Country as part of my two-year project to tell the stories of the community grassroots initiatives and organizations working to increase access to fresh, healthy foods for all people. WHYHUNGER is a non-profit from New York which has been working to alleviate hunger and empower communities since 1975. We are putting together an online resource page that tells the stories of the USDA's Community Food Project grant recipients, as well as offers practical skills for food growers and community food planners throughout the country. I was impressed by the inspiring work happening on tribal lands in Muscogee (Creek) Nation and in Tulsa to change our culture of unhealthy, unjust food economies."

One of the successes that comes from the CFP experience is the collaboration of work that Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative has with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Food and Fitness Policy Council. The food and fitness policy council comprised of decision makers, stakeholders and tribal leaders who see the vision to help the Muscogee (Creek) Nation form policies that will become tribal law to empower our people by growing and eating healthy foods, combating childhood obesity, strengthening our food sovereignty, food sustainability and food security for all.

Top: Barton Williams, Lou Fixico, and David Hanson Bottom: David Hanson and Lou Fixico

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program

H. June Marshall
BFRP Project Director



MFSI is in the second year of the program. The first session required all participants, whether in the Horticulture or Livestock tracks, to meet on Saturday, January 19, 2013, in Poteau, OK to begin the year-long program that will consist of classroom, hands-on activities, and learning from one another as experiences are shared. The group is diversified from young to older beginning farmers and ranchers. MFSI brought in eight beginners from Jenks, Henryetta, Bristow, Weleetka, Wetumka, Wilson Community, Morris, and Okmulgee. First session was learning to enhance a business plan or starting from scratch and putting one together. Most of the MFSI participants are enrolled in the horticulture track but there are eight who are

enrolled in the livestock track. February 9th is the next training day for the livestock session that will be held in Poteau. Horticulture session will be held at the MFSI office in Okmulgee on March 9th. Watch your local newspaper for further information. If you have any questions, contact J. Marshall at 918.752.6139 or email jmarshall@mvscocefood.org



Top: Left to right front: JoAnn Fox & Jennie Lilliard, and in back left Loretta Yahola-Griffin, horticulture participants.

Bottom: Livestock participants Richard and Sandra Vanderslice, Bristow.



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<http://www.mvskokefood.org>

February 2013

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED



David Redhage, SARE Program Manager for the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, instructing Beginning Farmers & Ranchers on “how to” prepare Farm Business Plan on January 19th at the first session of the BFRP in Poteau.

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, organized exclusively for charitable, educational and scientific purposes.

MFSI OFFICE

MVSKOKE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY INITIATIVE

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

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