



# **Indigenous Food Models Models of Food Sovereignty**

EcoFarm Conference

January 26, 2018



# What will we cover?

- A little bit about Food History in Indigenous America
- A little about First Nations
- Food systems work and our approach
- Jackie will focus on Land Manage practices in Indian Country



Question?

How many people have heard  
of First Nations Development  
Institute in Longmont,  
Colorado?



# Indian Country/ Food History

- For lack of a better framework, think of history as three distinct chapters:
  1. Pre-contact
  2. Contact
  3. Present Day



# Pre-Contact

- Let's just get this out of the way (our starting point):

## **An economy-**

a society's system of managing it's resources





# Pre-contact Model

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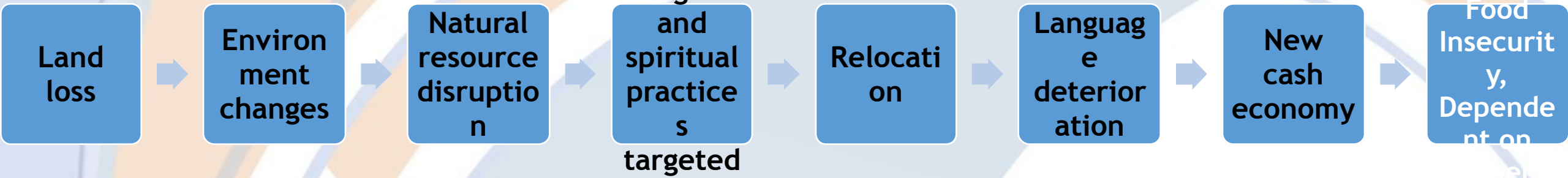


# Contact Period

- This is where we start to see a serious clash in food systems.
- Just like our institutions were created to support a food systems, we see a deliberate attempt to destroy our food systems to destroy our institutions.



# Native food systems in Context







# Post-contact Food Model

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# Examples

- Buffalo were targeted to remove Plains Indians from the Dakotas
- General Allotment Act of 1883- Divested Tribal Nations of land under the guise of agricultural production
- Crow Act of 1921- Allotted the Crow reservation, but also restricted sale of agricultural products as not to compete with neighboring farmers



# Lessons in the Change



The Ration Program was the first national food system in America. It's primary food products were white flour, white sugar, and lard. Today, it has evolved into the Food Distribution on Indian Reservations Program (FDPIR), but an ominous predecessor to our American commercial food system we see today.





# Early California Indian Laws of 1850



The initial version, Senate Bill 54, was authored by John Bidwell, who was a member of the first group of emigrants to arrive in California over land in 1841. Bidwell's bill permitted Indians to continue their traditional practices or "usual avocations" of "hunting, fishing, gathering seeds and acorns for the maintenance [sic] themselves and families." It also stated that "in no case shall [I]ndians be forced to abando their village sites where they have lived from time immemorial." The protection of California Indians' traditional practice of gathering acorns, and explicit recognition of their ancestral lands were never included in the final version of the law passed by the Legislature on April 22, 1850.



### [Sometimes Writer-Blogger Cutcha Risling Baldy](#)

[January 19 at 10:57am](#) :

[“The BIA tried to stop us from eating acorns. They made a plan so that we would no longer be acorn eaters. Indian people, we say, are acorn eaters. Eating acorns is a revolutionary act.” -Melodie George-Moore.](#)

[Acorn making workshop today with my Mom and Melodie George-Moore. \[#acorneaters\]\(#\)](#)

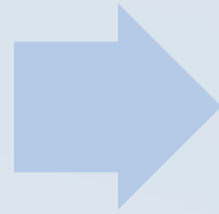




# First Nations Development Institute Mission & Guiding Principle

## Mission

- **First Nations works to strengthen American Indian economies to support healthy Native communities. We invest in and create innovative**



## Guiding Principle

- **We believe that when armed with the appropriate resources, Native Peoples hold the capacity and**



# Support Native Control of Native Assets: What “Assets” Mean to First Nations

## ASSETS IN INDIAN COUNTRY

- Physical Assets
- Natural Assets
- Social Capital
- Human Capital
- Political Assets
- Financial/ Economic Assets

**Institutional Assets**

**Cultural Assets**



# First Nations' Strategies & Programs





# Notable Facts About First Nations

1980

- Founded as First Nations Financial Project
- The first nonprofit social enterprise exclusively committed to Native control of Native assets
  - “Native communities hold a vast amount of assets, the issue is they do not control them.”

1980-Current

- Provider of training and technical assistance
- In 1985-86, First Nations assisted in the creation of The Lakota Funds on the Pine Ridge Reservation, the first Native American community development financial institution (CDFI) in the U.S.
- First Nations, with EPT and NAFI, create Inter-Tribal Me

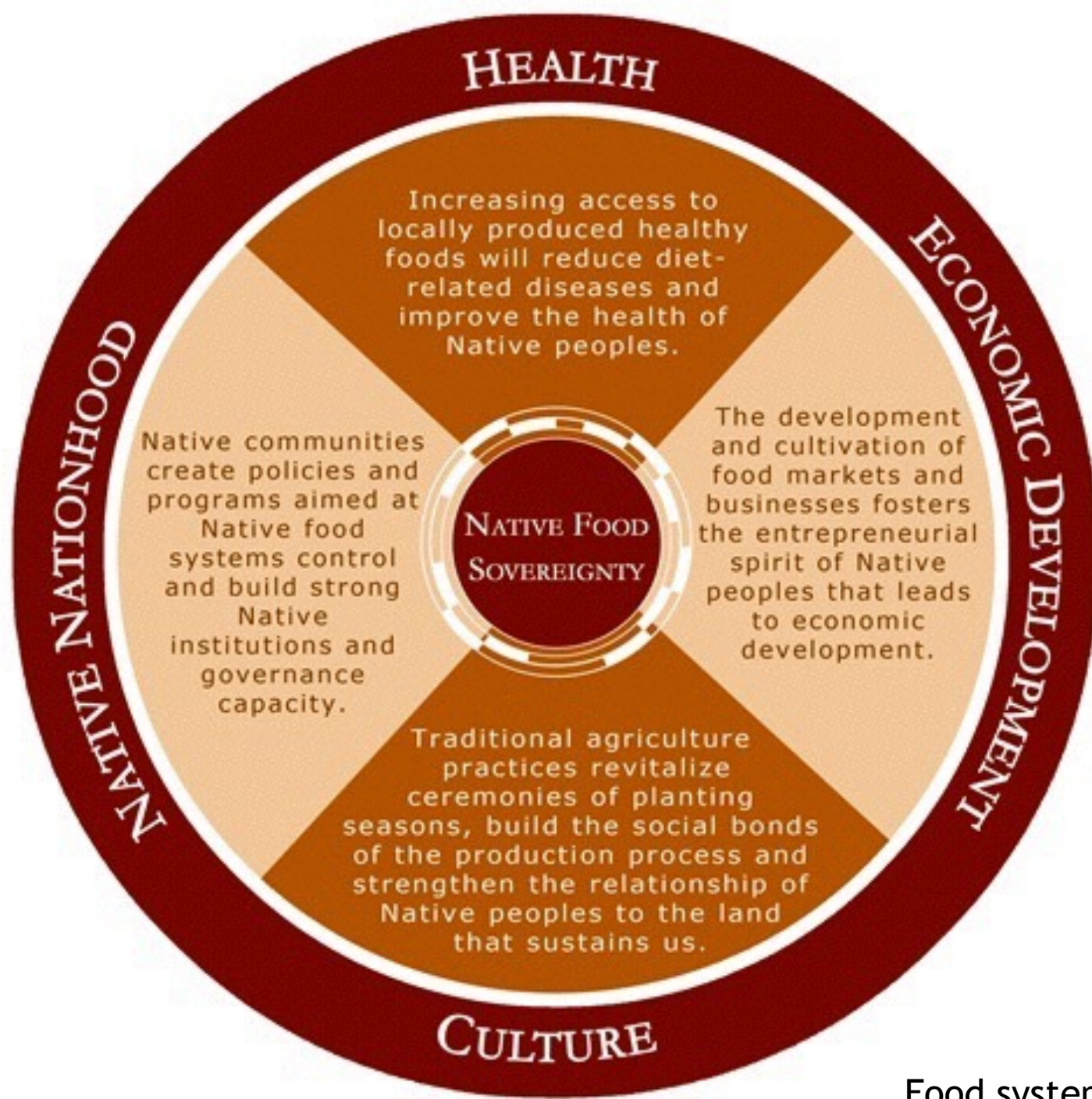
1993-Current

- First Nations becomes a national grantmaker supporting Native-led and developed economic and community development
- First Nations has awarded nearly 1,200 grants totaling \$27 million





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# Nourishing Native Foods and Health Program Goals and Approach

1. **Capitalize** projects with financial assistance through grantmaking to support Native-led and developed efforts to increase access to fresh, healthy and traditional foods (food security/access); increase market based interventions including business development; and support development of tribal policy to increase local food system control.
2. **Technical Assistance and training** to build organizational capacity, human capacity and networking opportunities for Native communities engaged in food systems work.
3. **Public Education** to inform broader public of the great work occurring in Indian Country around local food systems. This the development of tools and resources.
4. Support tribal policy development and **elevate Native voice** in federal policy discussions around food systems (USDA, FSA, etc.).



# What Does First Nations Fund?

- Native community led and developed programs
  - Tribes, Native nonprofits and grassroots community groups
  - Native nonprofits and grassroots community groups must be Native controlled defined as 51% of the board must be Native
- National Funder (though at times we have geographic restrictions usually to comply with our funder desires).
- Almost all of our grant programs are based on a competitive request for proposals.
- In 2016, we received about \$14 million in grant requests a year (over 850 applications) and only able to award \$2.8 million (175 grants).
  - Sadly we have to say no more than we can say yes



# Restoring Control of Rangeland Management to Native American Communities and Producers

Jackie Francke  
Vice President of Programs & Administration





*Regaining Control of our Food System and Economies requires us to Regain Control of our land.*





# My Focus

To showcase First Nations' efforts to help Tribes regain control of ecological stewardship and develop strategies to capitalize off Tribal lands when:

1. It has only been about 40 years since Tribes have been able to initiate control of federal programs that contribute to the betterment of their communities (PL-93-638).
2. A large majority of Tribal lands are held in trust by the United States and still managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).
3. Native American producers do not have ownership of the land therefore, cannot use land as collateral to advance agri-businesses and other opportunities.
4. Tribal lands have become very fractionated as a result of land being passed down from one generation to next. This complicates conservation efforts and requires a collective effort.





# Background

- 2011-2012: - First Nations initiated work with Navajo producers to assist in increasing access to resources and capital so that they could advance their efforts around restoring local foods, expand agri-businesses, and increase access to opportunities.
- Identified a major hurdle: conservation planning. Two separate requirements. One by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to farm/ranch on the Navajo Nation and a requirement by USDA in order to participate in USDA opportunities; FSA loans, EQIP, etc.
- 12,000 pending requests on the Navajo Nation for assistance in the development of conservation plans.
  - ❖ *Challenge:* Limited access to technical assistance due to small number of NN/USDA/BIA conservation specialists who were already overextended. Know who the partners are.
  - ❖ *Challenge:* The need for Navajo language speakers knowledgeable of landscape and Navajo translation of the vegetation and process.
  - ❖ *Challenge:* Understanding of USDA and BIA conservation planning processes. Limit internet.



# Background

- 2012-2014: – First Nations initiates work to certify tribal community members as certified conservation planners under the USDA conservation planning guidelines and to develop a conservation planning guide to assist Native producers in development of their own conservation plans.
- **Goal:** To increase human and educational resources needed to address the backlog of conservation planning requests.
- Six tribal members were trained to assist Native producers, to the point that required USDA approval.
  - ✓ *Challenge:* Limited access to technical assistance due to small number of NN/USDA/BIA conservation specialists who were already overextended.
  - ✓ *Challenge:* The need for Navajo language speakers knowledgeable of landscape and Navajo translation of the vegetation.
  - ✓ *Challenge:* Understanding of USDA and BIA conservation planning processes.
  - ❖ *Challenge:* Infuse traditional ecological knowledge and community engagement with NRCS's 9-step process



# First Nations Approach to Creating Opportunities - Leveraging Existing Assets

## ASSETS IN INDIAN COUNTRY

- **Physical Assets**
- - Infrastructure
- **Natural Assets**
- **Social Capital**
- Kinship, social networks

### Human Capital

Age, experience, skills

### Institutional Assets

- NPOs, community groups

### Political Assets

Sovereignty

### Financial/ Economic Assets

- Personal Wealth

### Cultural Assets

- Indigenous knowledge, customs





# Currently

- 2015-Present: – Using the First Nations’ Conservation Planning Guide for Native American Ranchers, First Nations embarked on a *community tiered approach* to conservation planning.
- **Goal:**
  - ❖ Engage tribal members in ecological stewardship – Empower tribal member to develop concepts and strategies
  - ❖ Equip producers with traditional, historical, and technical knowledge of the landscape
  - ❖ Convene producers that manage livestock herds together, i.e., livestock associations, range management units, clan families, family farms, conservation districts, etc., so they can learn together
  - ❖ Acknowledge historical grazing/hunting/farming areas used by grandparents.
  - ❖ Share conservation goals, vision for the community, potential strategies. Identify Problems or Opportunities – the farmer or rancher point of view. It is their plan, take ownership and direction.
  - ❖ Spend time in the field learning about the ecology and topography. Explanation of technical aspects in regards to regulations (BIA/Tribal or other).
  - ❖ Share stories, laugh together, eat together, learn together....



# Community Tiered Approach to Conservation Planning



Engage Tribal members, producers, NPO organizations, leaders, NRCS, BIA, Navajo Nation, community groups



Re-introduce conservation planning; share traditional stewardship practices; historical grazing/farming sites



Explore the landscape - topography, traditional names of areas and vegetation. Begin developing inventory maps while acknowledging traditional and cultural significance to the community



Re-connect with the land & soil and explore what it has to offer; conduct soil survey site descriptions. Armed with the knowledge begin to develop resource goals, economic goals; community goals



Fieldwork: Confirm soils, identify ecological sites, plant community, range health, wildlife habitat. Compare goals to field data to assure that land capacity is aligned with goals. Develop a conservation plan map.



Reflect on principles of range management; finalize and assemble conservation plans; prepare presentations; finish plans; provide time for questions and answers.

- Building Community
- Increasing Opportunities
- Developing Infrastructure
- Integrating on Cultural and Traditional Knowledge
- Strengthening Human Resources
- Reviving Local Economies
- Strengthening families, partnerships, collaboration
- ***Regaining Control of the Land***





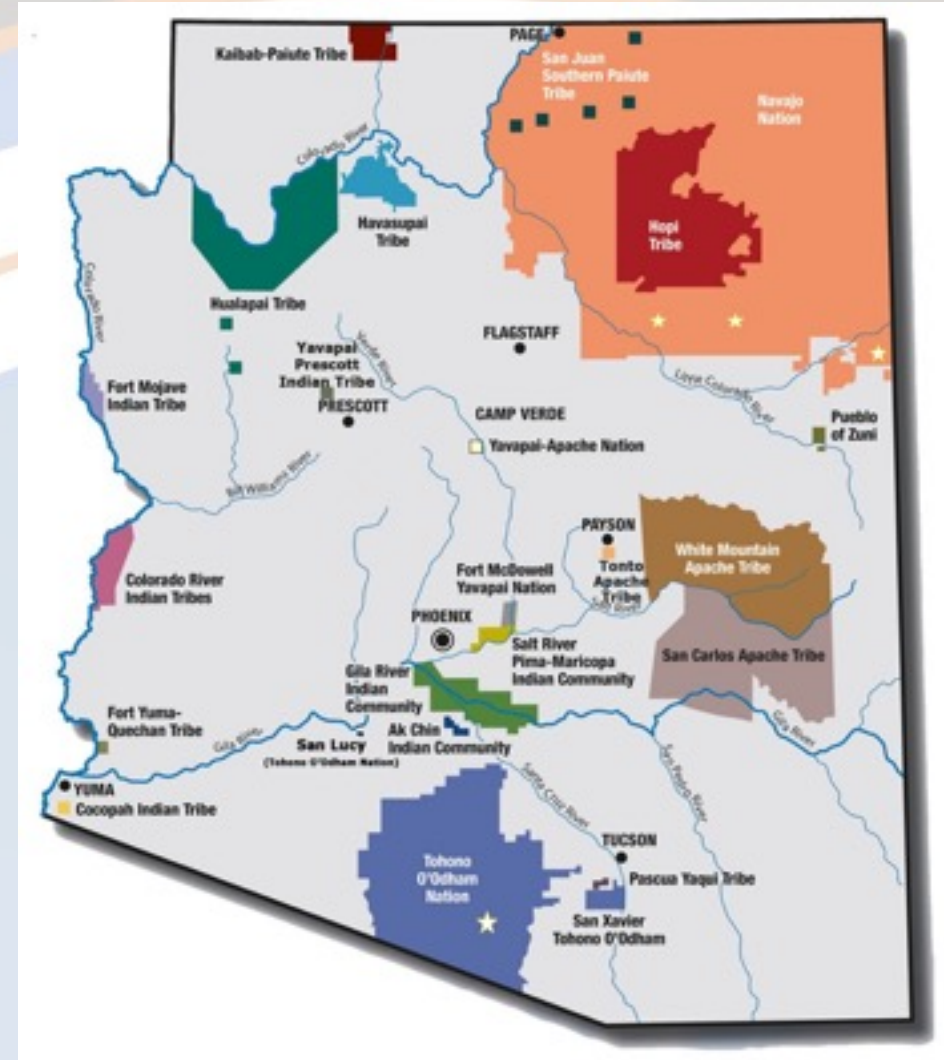
# Impact of Efforts

- Planning sessions provided at in 5 communities:
  - ❖ Tohono O'odham Nation – Livestock Association
    - (15 participants)/20,000 acres/1 EQIP
  - ❖ Navajo Nation Tolani Lake Chapter – Water Users & Livestock Association
    - (55 participants)/64,059 acres/(3 EQIP)
  - ❖ Navajo Nation Indian Wells Chapter
    - (10 participants)/28,790 acres
  - ❖ Navajo Nation New Lands Chapter – 14R Ranch
    - (10 participants)/3 RMU's/50,000 acres (2 EQIP)
  - ❖ Navajo Nation Tohatchi Chapter – Farm Board => Scheduled for February 2018 (expecting 25 participants)



# Tohono O'Odham Gu Achi Livestock Association

- Tribal herd was established in 1933-34 by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a demonstration project to create economic opportunities through ranching for communities of Tohono O'odham.
- 7 Range Units
- Approximately 20,000 acres of rangeland
- Located in the upper end of the Sonoran Desert







# Tohono O'odham Gu Achi Livestock Association

## Goals:

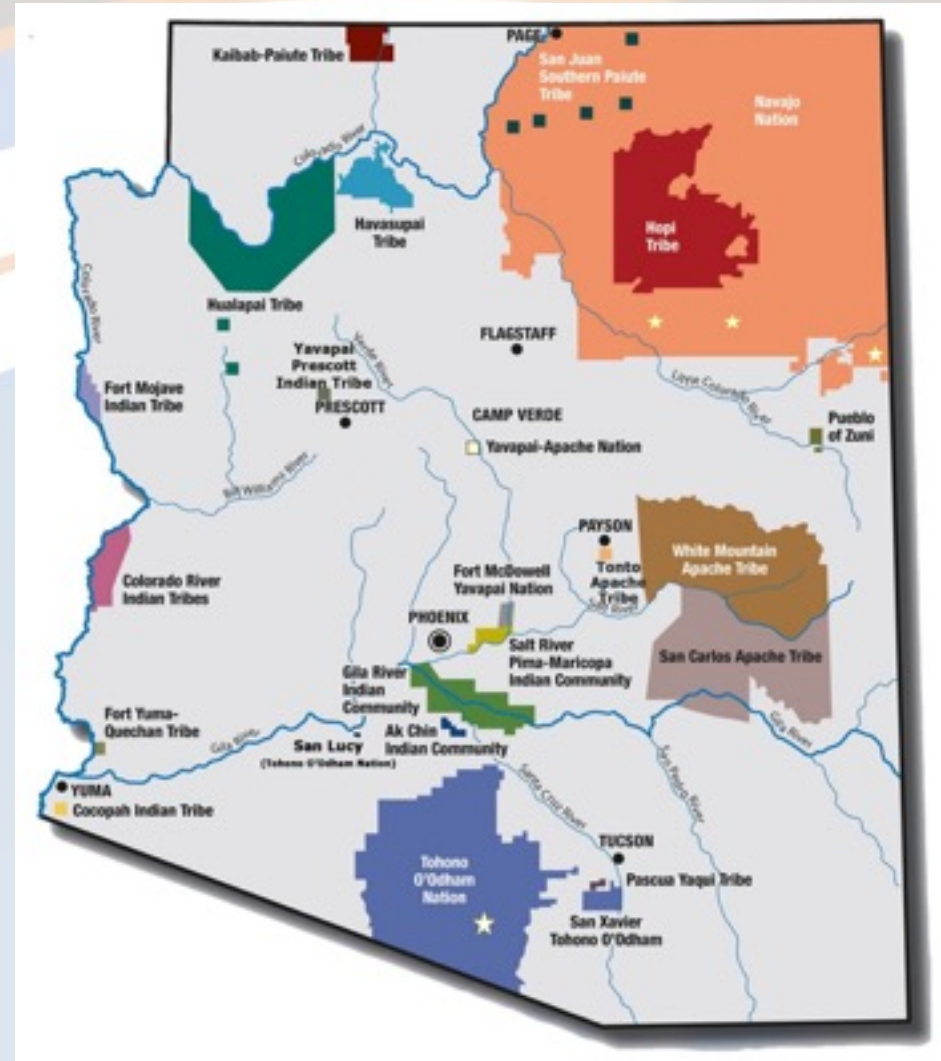
- To ranching and assess potential for economic opportunities.
- Explore potential areas for community farming opportunities.





# 14R Ranch – Navajo Nation

- Developed as means to generate economic development for families relocated to New Lands as a result of the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute settlement in 1996
- 365,000 acres
- 14 Ranch Units
- 34 Families







# 14R Ranch – Navajo Nation



- A part of the Native American Beef that includes:
  - Acoma Pueblo
  - Isleta Pueblo
  - Jicarilla Apache
  - White Mountain Apache
- 25 Families with the potential for 79
- Raising source verified beef
- Collective Grazing
- Collective buying and selling
- Partnership with LaBatt Food Service



SOURCE VERIFIED  
**NATIVE AMERICAN  
BEEF**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7hnDEq7oJ>





***Empowers People of the land & Tribal communities to return to traditional ecological stewardship.***

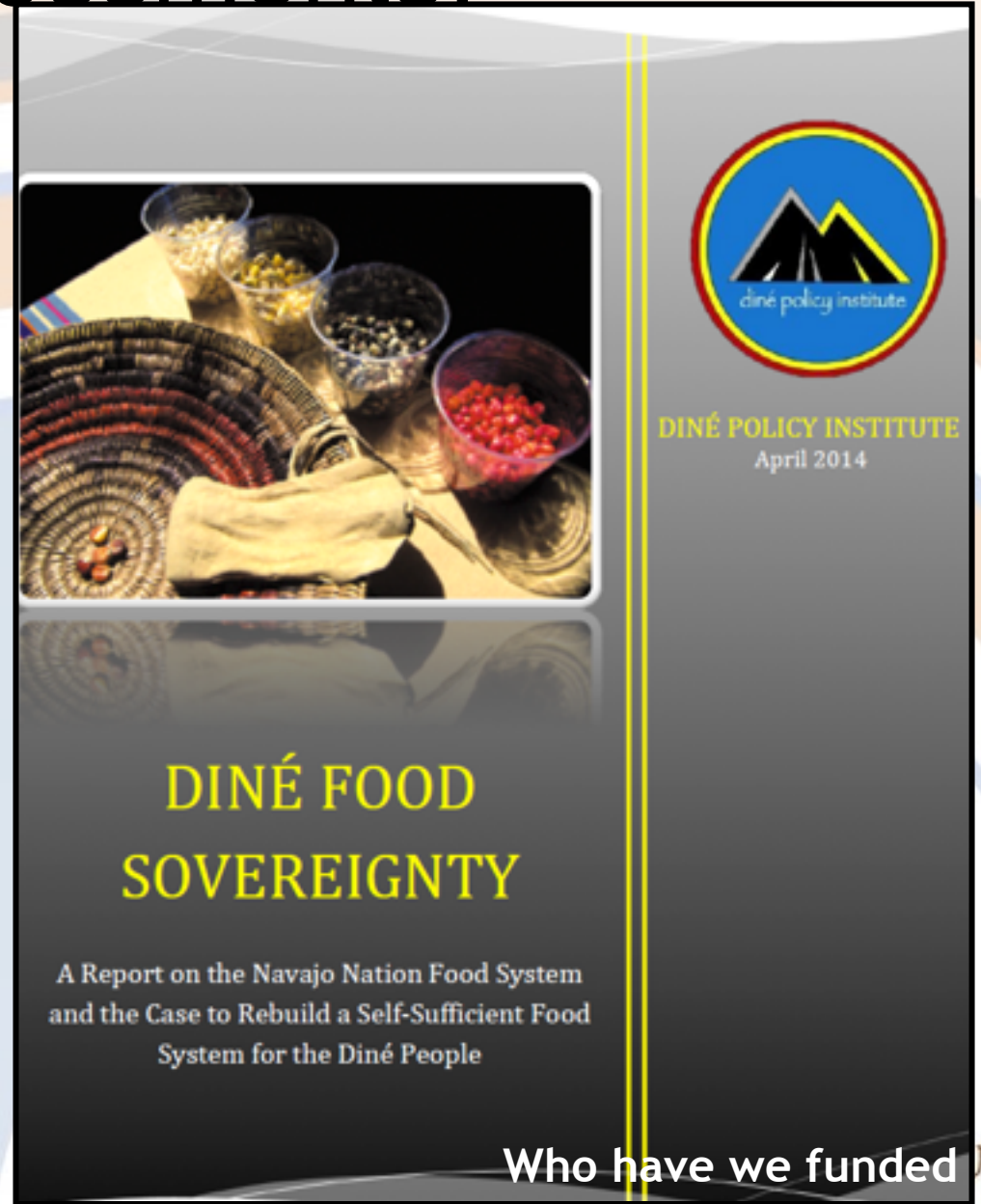
- Acknowledges historical knowledge of the seasons, the plants, and sacred sites,***
- Unites our elders, young people and communities,***
- Integrates culture and utmost respect.***





# Community Food Assessments: Dine Policy Institute

- Hired student interns to conduct assessment with one lead researcher.
- Focused on five chapters surrounding Diné College. Got official approval from each Chapter House.
- Conducted historical analysis to examine how colonization impacted food system and changed diet
- Existing data: Collected demographic data from US census
- Conducted Surveys at local food retail outlets in the summer and also other community events
- Outcome: published report available on the DPI website and tribal council policy report
- Presented to college, Council and made available to the public





# Food Policy: The Yurok Tribe of California

- “It is the inherent sovereign right of the Yurok People to grow plants from natural traditional seeds and to sustainably harvest plants, salmon and other fish, animals, and other life-giving foods and medicines, in order to sustain our families and communities as we have successfully done since time immemorial; our Court will enforce any violations of these inherent, and now codified, rights.” *Chief Judge Abby Abinanti*

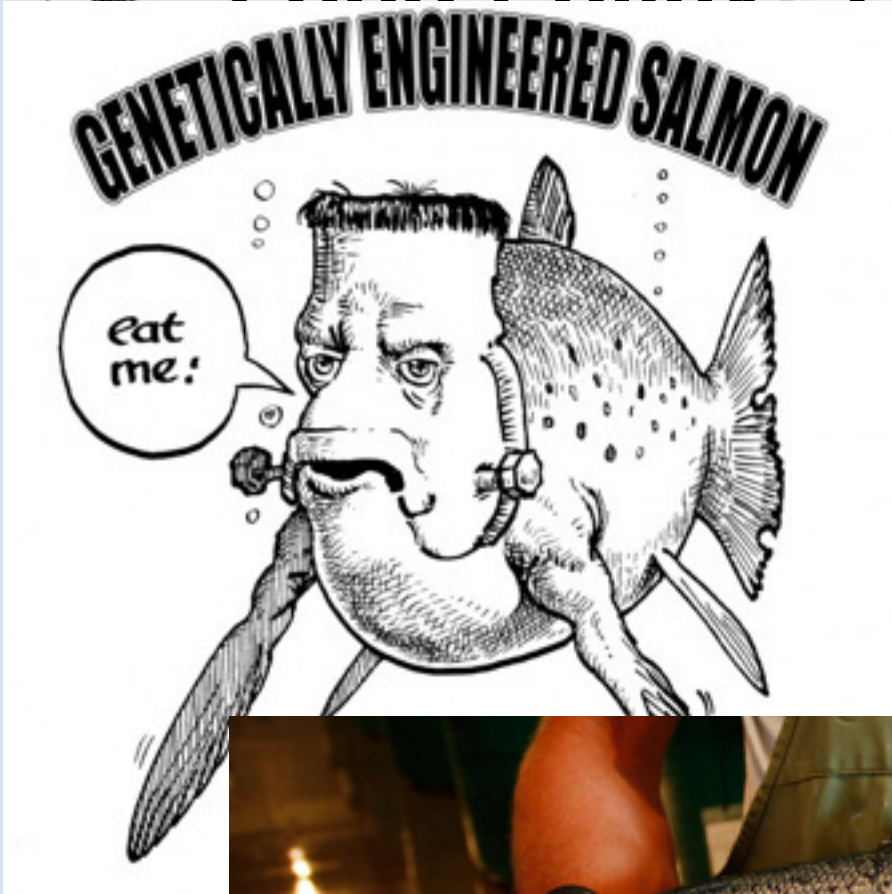


THE YUROK TRIBE



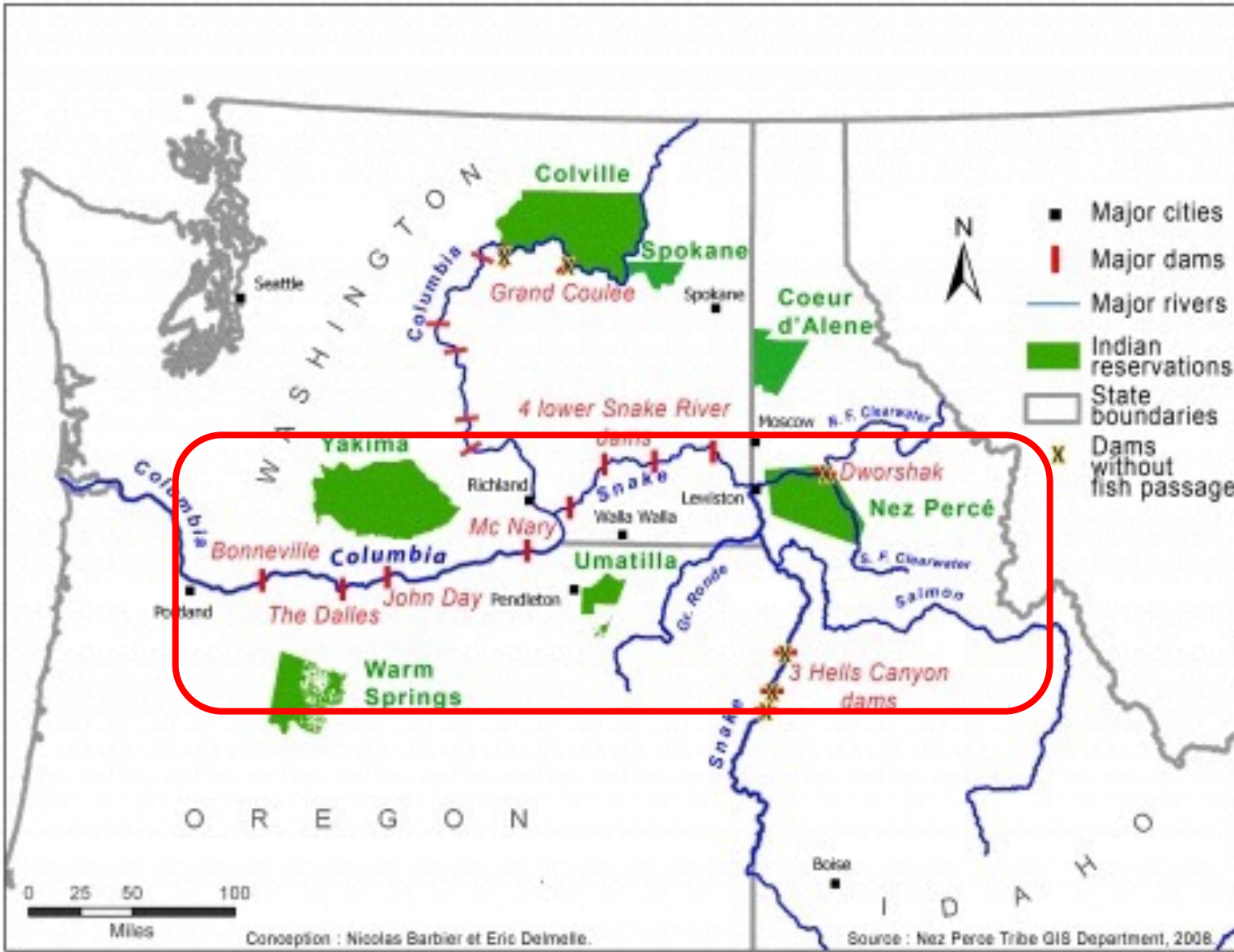


# Food Policy: The Yurok Tribe of California





# Entrepreneurship: Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission



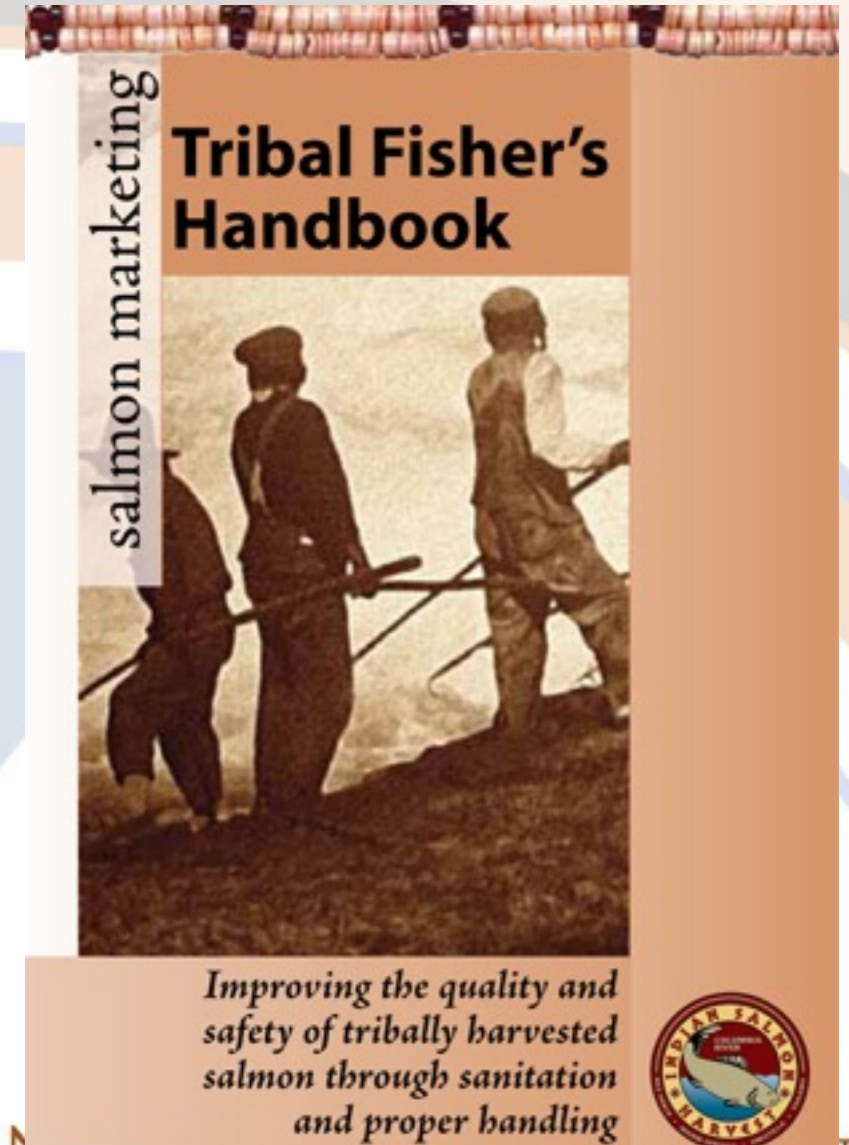
ST NATIONS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE Who have we funded





# Entrepreneurship: Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

- Commission devised and shared strategies to increase food safety for tribal fishers. CRITFC began offering workshops on food safety and processes - proper icing, vacuum packing, canning, labeling and quality control.
- Have increased value of tribal fisherman fish (more than non-tribal fish). Increase income of fisherman.







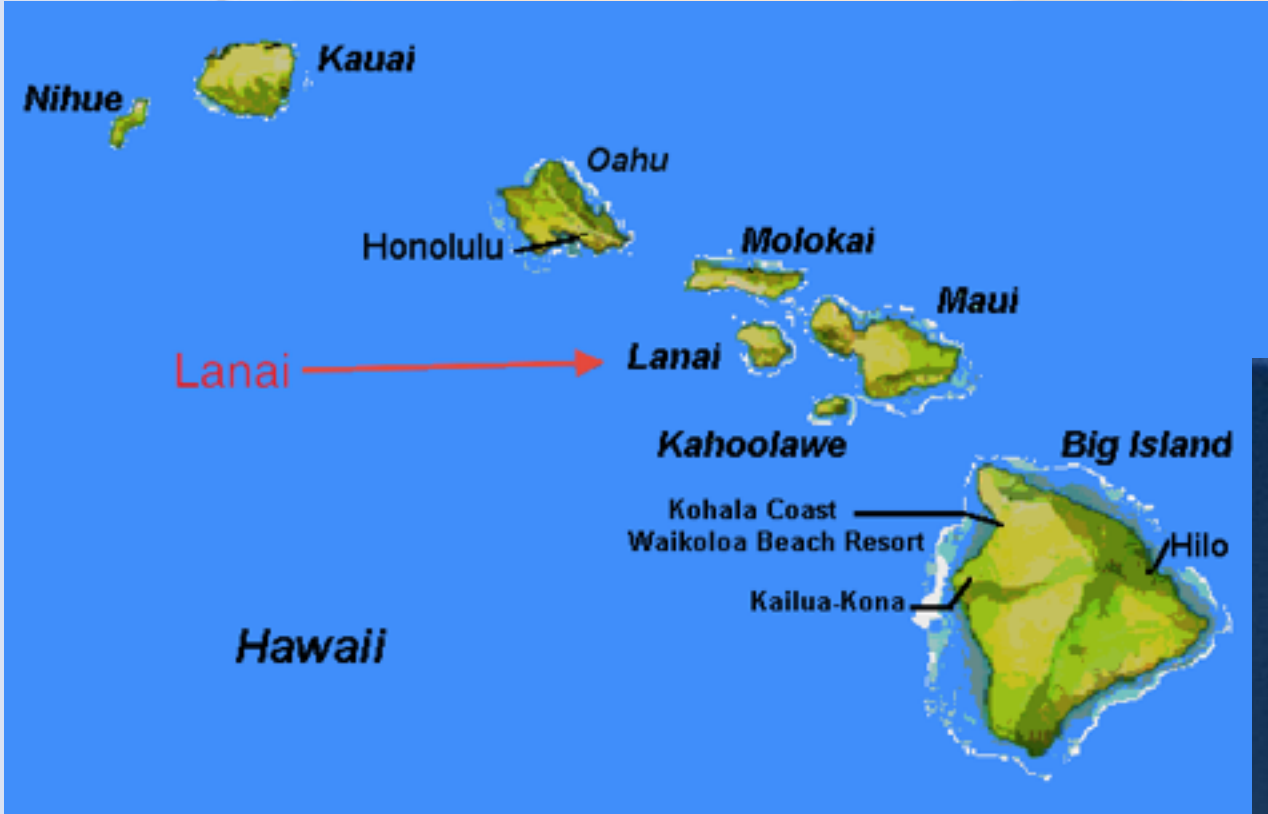
# Waimea Homesteaders Association: Farming for the Working Class

- Start with a hands-on, 17-week training course, where they study farming from “A to Z” and reconnect with their purpose and responsibility for the land.
- From there, Waimea helps families build a greenhouse on their property, laying irrigation systems and providing education and tools.





# Market Access: Laulima Kuha'o Lanai City, HI



Who have we funded

FIRST NATIONS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE





# Market Access: Laulima Kuha'o (Lanai City, HI)







# Oneida Youth Entrepreneur Project



Who have we funded





# Traditional Food Access: Oglala Sioux Parks and Recreation Authority and the Bison Meat Delivery Program

- High cost and limited access to buffalo
- OSPRA buffalo herd taken to slaughter to provide access to tribal members at reduced cost
- Sold at Farmers markets, C-stores and OSPRA “store”
- Accept EBT
  - Harvesting, slaughter and pack and wrap are costly operations so they do it at cost; USDA issues





# The Food Movement in Indian Country

## Reclaiming Indigenous Food Systems

Policy

Education

Environment

Economy

Health/  
Nutrition

Traditional  
Foods





# What makes First Nations Unique as a Funder?

- **Believe in Native innovation** not necessarily “evidence based practice”
- Less concerned with process, more concerned with **ideas/ concept** of how a project will strengthen Native asset control.
- Connecting idea and concept to longer term strategy and plan.
  - When not connected to longer term strategy, it is hard to see what the end goal is for the community.
  - Community engagement and sharing
- We don't fund deficient based frameworks related to community development.
- We do fund programs over and over as long as we see progression to longer term goal and strategy.