White Earth Anishinaabe Tribal Food Policy Draft

Anishinaabe people and other peoples across North America have traditionally produced all the foods we needed for our peoples. Our Miiijim involves an ongoing relationship with the Creator and all of our relatives, whether they have wings, fins, roots or paws. The historical practices of harvesting wild rice, trapping, snaring, netting and gardening have provided for our people since time immemorial and will continue to do so in to the future. These practices have been explicitly and implicitly reaffirmed through treaty rights and ongoing harvesting within our reservation and within the treaty boundaries of the l855 and l837 treaties, and through our ceremonial practices. We intend to insure the continuation of these traditions as a sovereign nation.

More recently, our people have faced diminished access to traditional foods and medicines as a result of colonization, economic, ecological and jurisdictional practices. The consequences for our community indicate that American Indian and Native Alaskan youth aged 11-19 have nine times higher likelihood of being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. (CDC Diabetes Fact Sheet). On the White Earth reservation, an estimated one third of the Indian Health Service population is afflicted with this disease, and many of our youth face a higher level of obesity.

Recognizing our health, and indeed the future of our nation is tied to secure access and relationship with our traditional Anishinaabe foods, we wish to reaffirm this relationship through a White Earth Anishinaabe food policy. This work is complimented by national work promoted by the Let’s Move It in Indian Country as 1st Lady Michelle Obama’s campaign to increase physical activity among high risk populations for obesity. On the tribal government level healthy lifestyle resolutions have been adopted relating to tribal food and fitness policy by the Muskogee (Creek) Nation, as they push their citizens to live healthier lifestyles. the Oneida of Wisconsin have also made local food production a priority within their tribal government as they have created the Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems which comprises of a local food system which aims to provide fresh and healthy foods in their schools and institutions. From these two examples alone you can see that consciousness and education about living healthy and having access to fresh and local foods is certainly a priority in Native Communities.

Economically, we also realize that food is a significant element of our tribal economy, yet at the present time, represents a large drain on our economy. In specific, a study completed in 2008,indicated that tribal households and programs spent $8 million a year on access to foods, and that this included over $7 million spent annually in off reservation food vendors. This represents a significant economic drain to our community. As such, this loss of income means that our tribal community continues to seek to earn money and derive income from wage jobs, yet is buying food elsewhere. In order to begin addressing this economic loss to our community, we are interested in building a local food system which will support local farmers, harvesters, and producers to create foods available for sale at local markets farmers markets, stores, and for tribal institutions including tribal schools and programs. This will allow us to circulate money within our reservation economy and create a “multiplier” generating more jobs and creating a more beneficial local food economy.

In addition, we realize that our tribal food, is at present , when purchased nationally, more and more subject to the vagaries of the world fossil fuel market. In general, the average meal travels over l500 miles to our tables on the reservation, and as the price of oil ;increases, the price of food will also increase. In a community already at risk of food insecurity and facing food insecurity, this represents a large problem for our people We wish to address this through mitigation and adaptation.

Anishinaabe Local Food and Community Self-Governance Ordinance of 2012

An Ordinance to Protect the Health and Integrity of the Local Food System in the Sovereign Nation of White Earth Ojibwe.

Section 1. Name. This Ordinance shall be known and may be cited as the “White Earth Ojibwe Food Security Policy””

Section 2. Definitions.

as used in this ordinance:

(a) “Traditional Foods” - Foods harvested by the Ojibwe people prior to European contact, including but not limited to foods that are celebrated and included in the Ojibwe ceremonial cycle.

* 1. “Heirloom” - Seeds that have been passed down by the generations and have not been genetically modified in any way.
  2. “Local Foods” - foods that reflect Ojibwe and the northern Minnesota region.
  3. “Community Social Event” - a gathering of people represented of the local population and is deemed public and open to the general public.
  4. Cultural gathering of Anishinaabeg people, to be construed as a practice of traditional ceremonial and cultural ways of our people.
  5. “Seed Preservation” - Designation to save seeds using an archive system of categorizing a seed library for educational purposes.
  6. “White Earth Ojibwe” - The original inhabitants of the northern Minnesota region prior to European contact, represented by the White Earth Reservation Tribal Government in this case.
  7. Traditional harvested foods will be those which have been customarily a part of our medicinal and nutritional wealth and are harvested from land and waters within our territories including those territories defined by the l837, l855 and l867 treaties.

Section 3. Preamble and Purpose.

We Anishinaabe have responsibility and a right to a continuing relationship with our traditional foods and lifeways. This includes our ability to practice, preserve and develop traditional and local food systems with the intention of promoting public health, sustainability, tribal and individual sovereignty, and cultural preservation. We recognize and encourage community members, community organizations, and White Earth Ojibwe citizens to practice traditional agricultural practices and harvesting that will contribute to the overall well-being of our regional populations. By promoting Traditional Agricultural practices will enhance the vitality to the overall economic, environmental, physical, social, and spiritual wealth of our community. As such, our right to a local food system requires us to assert our inherent right to self-government and sustainability. We recognize the authority to protect that right as belonging to the people of White Earth Ojibwe.

We have faith in our citizen’s ability to educate themselves and make informed decisions. We hold that federal and state regulations impede local food production and constitute a usurpation of our citizens’ rights to food of their choice. We support food that fundamentally respects human dignity and health, nourishes individuals and the community, revitalizes and promotes traditional agricultural knowledge. We are therefore duty bound under the (White Earth Ojibwe Constitution??).

The purpose of the Local Food and Community Self-Governance Ordinance is to:

* 1. Revitalize and promote traditional agricultural knowledge and practices to the White Earth Ojibwe community.
  2. Enhance the local economy by promoting the production of traditional foods.
  3. Promote holistic healthy lifestyles, while working in collaboration with community organizations and tribal health systems.
  4. Increase Food Security and Seed Sovereignty from corporate entities.
  5. Preserve Local knowledge and traditional foodways.
  6. Support community engagement through encouraging local foods between producers and consumers.
  7. Support processing and access to traditional harvested foods in the White Earth Anishinaabe territory.

Section 4. Authority. This Ordinance is adopted and enacted pursuant to the inherent, inalienable, and fundamental right of the citizens of the White Earth Ojibwe to self-government, and under the authority recognized as belonging to the citizens of the White Earth Ojibwe by all relevant federal, international and tribal laws including, but not limited to the following:

Include Treaty Rights:

Treaty with the Chippewa, 1837

*Article 5: “The privilege of hunting, fishing, and gathering of wild rice, upon the lands, the rivers and lakes included in the territory ceded, is guarantied to the Indians, during the pleasure of the president of the United States.”*

*Treaty with the Chippewa, 1867*

*Article 8: “For the purpose of protecting and encouraging the Indians, parties to this treaty, in their efforts to become self-sustaining by means of agriculture, and the adoption of the habits of civilized life, it is hereby agreed that, in case of the commission by any of the said* *Indians of crimes against life or property, the person charged with such crimes may be arrested, upon the demand of the agent, by the sheriff of the county of Minnesota in which said reservation may be located, and when so arrested may be tried, and if convicted, punished in the same manner as if he were not a member of an Indian tribe.”*

*United Nations Declaration on the Rights for Indigenous Peoples:*

*Article 20.*

1. *Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic, and social systems of institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in their traditional and other economic activities.*
2. *Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress.*

*Article 21.*

1. *Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.*

*Article 23.*

*Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.*

*Article 24.*

1. *Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without and discrimination, to all social and health services.*
2. *Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.*

*International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (Article 11 Right to Food)*

1. *The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international cooperation based on free consent.*
2. *The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international cooperation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:*
   1. *To Improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such as way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;*
   2. *Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.*

*Declaration of Atitlan*

*In Agreement that the content of the Right to Food Indigenous Peoples is a collective right based on our special spiritual relationship with Mother Earth, our lands and territories, environment, and natural resources that provide our traditional nutrition; underscoring that the means of subsistence of Indigenous Peoples nourishes our cultures, languages, social life, worldview, and especially our relationship with Mother Earth; emphasizing that the denial of the Right to Food of Indigenous Peoples not only denies us our physical survival, but also denies us our social organization, our cultures, traditions, languages, spirituality, sovereignty, and total identity, it is a denial of our collective indigenous existence,*

Section Five. Anishinaabe Food Access: Traditional Harvests and Traditional Agriculture:

a). Harvesting:

Whereas the Anishinaabe people require traditional foods for our good health and continuance in accordance with our covenant with the Creator and our ability to sustain ourselves and ecosystems the White Earth Tribal Council supports ongoing traditional harvests of wild rice, maple syrup, medicinal plants, firewood, fish, game and deer within the l837,l855 and l867 areas of the White Earth Anishinaabe people, within the recognition of the White Earth Tribal Conservation Code. We reaffirm the right and practice of sustainable harvesting in accordance with our code and our traditions.

b). Traditional agriculture:

l) The White Earth Tribal government supports the restoration of Anishinaabe traditional agriculture had harvesting techniques. This includes prescribed burning for berries, in accordance with tribal conservation authority (particularly blueberries), and use of island areas for gardening practices.

2) The White Earth Tribal government supports the restoration of traditional crop varieties to the White Earth Anishinasabeg people and beyond, including mandaamin ( corn) okosomin ( squash) beans, tobacco, melons . The White Earth Tribal Government supports community seed banking intent upon the restoration of these traditional crops for our Anishinaabeg people.

3) The White Earth tribal council supports the protection of integrity of these seeds with opposition to the use of genetically modified seeds on tribal lands within the reservation borders. The White Earth Tribal government supports preservation of these traditional seed stocks in community gardens, and considers them the wealth of our people.

4) The White Earth Tribal Council supports the use of traditional and organic fertilizer methods to restore traditional Anishinaabe agriculture for our community, and wishes to promote this through working with extension agencies, tribal colleges, and non profit organizations on the reservation.

5) The White Earth tribal council supports the creation of local processing facilities on the White Earth reservation to enhance local food production and access to traditional foods for our communities. This includes cooperation with the schools to teach basic canning and freezing techniques for traditional foods, drying , and preparation to insure these foods are available for tribal community members.

6) The White Earth Tribal Council will support local gardening efforts in each of the tribal communities through work to till and cultivate gardens with community members, provide support through tribal summer youth programs to enhance these gardens , and to support with local organizations, and USDA agencies, the distribution of seeds and plant starts for community members.

Section Six. Production and Distribution of Local Foods:

Whereas traditional foods have significant nutritional, cultural and economic value to our tribal community and represent an immense wealth of our tribal community, we wish to enhance and secure the sustainability of these foods, and allow them to be part of a tribal economy. As such, we provide, in accordance with Tribal Conservation and Tribal Health Codes for the following:

1. Traditional foods will be provided for community feasts, school systems and tribal programs in a manner that insures their sanitation, but provides for access to these foods.
2. Local foods will be encouraged including local breads, produce, and dairy, when prepared in a manner which meets tribal sanitation codes and will be available for sale on the reservation and for tribal programs, and tribal schools.

Distribution of Tribal Foods to Tribal Programs

1. Tribal producers shall have a preference in sales on the reservation at tribal events sponsored by the White Earth Tribal government and its agencies.
2. Tribal programs shall seek to purchase food from traditional and tribal producers representing an incremental increase in their budget annually, beginning at 20% in 2013 and increasing 5% annually over the next six years, with the goal of 50% local foods.
3. Tribal government shall seek collaborative grants with tribal producers and federal agencies to promote local food production in tribal agencies and tribal programs.