

White Earth Land Recovery Project Presents



Nurturing Cultural Unity Bonds

maada'oonidiwin gete-izhichigewinan
"sharing traditional (cultural) ways"

March 6th – 8th | Sugar Lake Lodge | Cohasset, MN

Welcome

Boozhoo Nindinawemaaganidag,

Hello All My Relatives,

I warmly welcome you to the 22nd Annual Great Lakes Indigenous Farming Conference. Last year, we gathered in this space to celebrate the farming community—sharing knowledge, learning from one another, and strengthening both new and existing relationships. This year, we come together once again to honor those who nourish the world: the farmers.

As we reflect on our greeting, Boozhoo Nindinawemaaganidog, we are reminded of the Ojibwe worldview—one that embraces kinship and interconnectedness with all people, animals, and nature. We live in relationship with everything that surrounds us, acknowledging those who came before us, those who walk with us today, and the many beings that share our world. Relationships give life meaning, and this conference provides an opportunity to reconnect and discover innovative ways to address the challenges we face.

This year's theme, Nurturing Cultural Unity Bonds, invites us to explore how we sustain and strengthen the bonds that unite us. This theme invites us to reflect on our relationships—with one another and the world we share. It weaves us together like a strong rope, reinforcing our connection so that we do not break.

During the conference, I hope you have the opportunity to cultivate and strengthen relationships, gain new knowledge, and immerse yourself in stories. May this peaceful gathering offer you a space for learning, reflection, and connection. I hope you leave feeling both rested and inspired—ready to return home with a renewed spirit and a fresh perspective to carry forward in your important work.

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to the success of the 22nd Annual Great Lakes Indigenous Farming Conference. It is because of you—and others like you—that our communities continue to grow, thrive, and flourish. Your dedication and presence make a meaningful difference.

Miigwech!



Margaret (Maggie) E. Rousu
Executive Director
White Earth Land Recovery Project



Our Sponsors



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SHAKOPEE MDEWAKANTON
SIOUX COMMUNITY



**LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT**



Our Vendors

Chalchiuhkoatl Kardós

Elderberry cordials, agua florida, tinctures, balms, bath salts, tea blends, infused oils, oxymels, infused honey, and more. Additionally, body adornments (earrings, bracelets) and seeds from the land we tend.

Renewing the Countryside

RTC is a Minnesota-based non-profit working through a variety of local, community-based food / farming programs to support more resilient communities in and around Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Emily Schmitt

Indigenous plant medicine and eco friendly personal care products including herbal salves, herbal tea, soap, solid lotion, lip balm, herbal infused honey, alcohol-free tinctures, and more!

North Circle Seeds

Chemical-free, sustainable, and organic seeds.

Anna Aguilar

Handmade jewelry

Sharon Nordrum

T-shirts in original designs and Ojibwe/Saami inspired acrylic paintings.

Edwin Campo

Ponchos, hats, hoodies, jackets, blankets, and earrings.

University of Minnesota

UMN survey, farmers, and AI

Dana Trickey

Porcupine quillwork, birchbark, wild rice, maple vinegar, beadwork, and printed items of art (greeting cards, coffee mugs, mouse pads, journals, etc.).

Estella Yeung

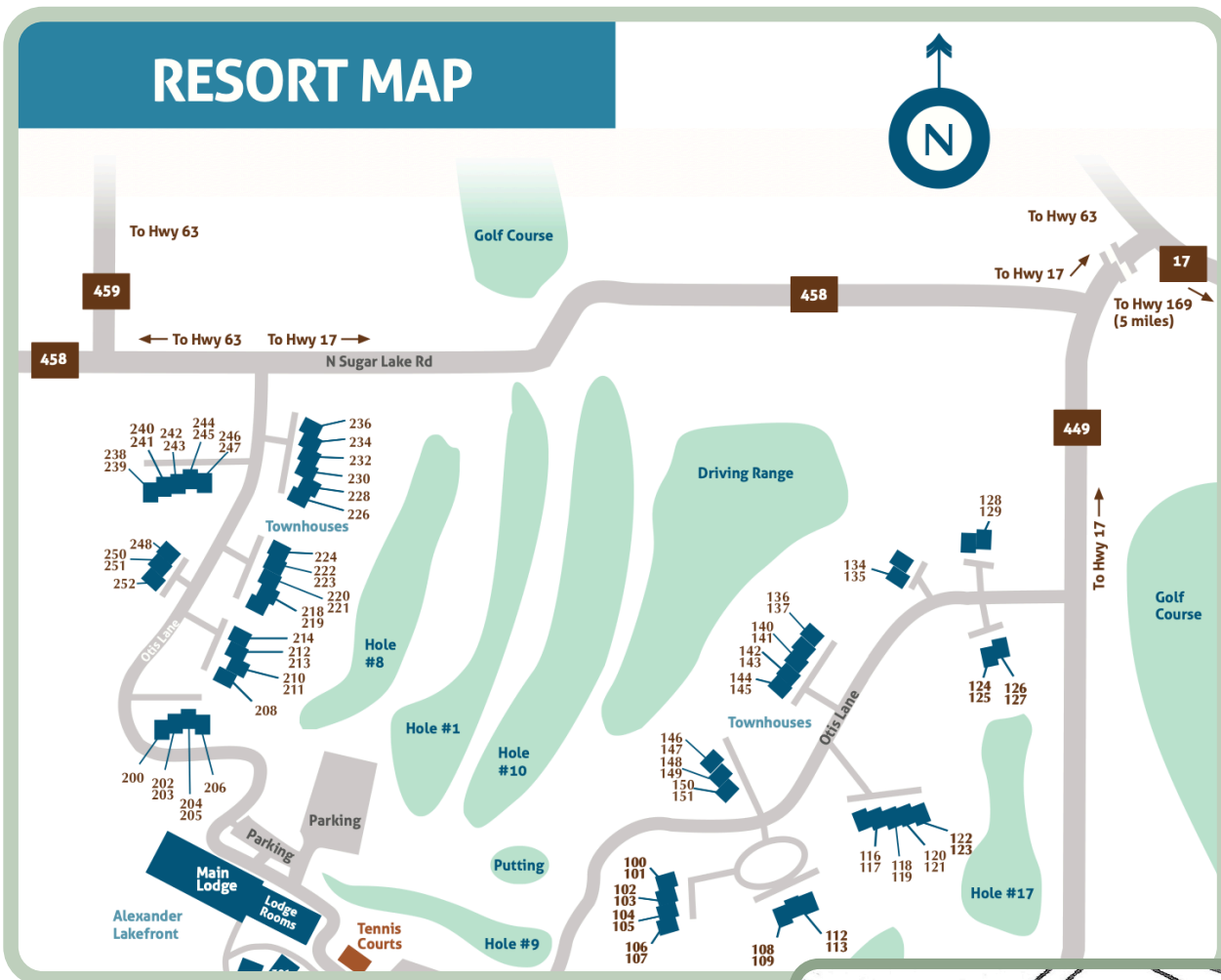
Natural skin products, jewelry, and crafts.

Custom Bead

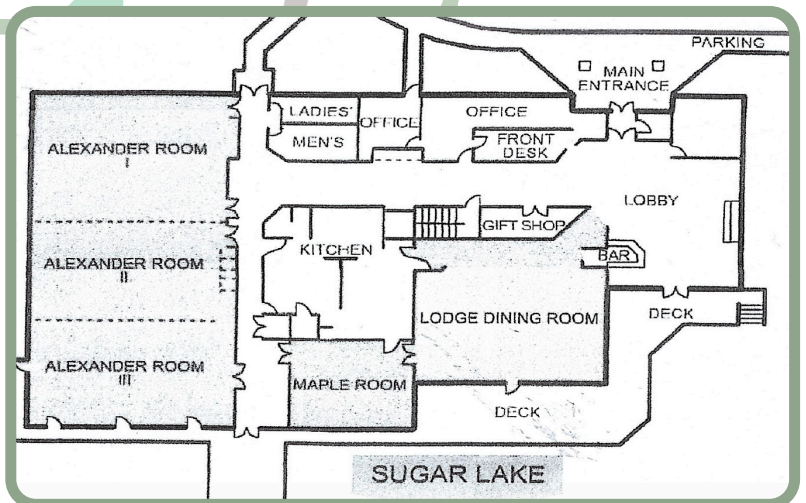
Beadwork, bracelets, barrettes, keychains, lanyards, earrings, and medallions.

Sugar Lake Lodge Map

- There will be a photographer taking photos for promotional use. Please let us know at the front desk if you are not comfortable with this.
- There are three rooms downstairs. There you will find the youth track in Asplin I and a seed swap room. Seed swap is open throughout conference hours in Asplin III downstairs.



What did you think?
 Please take this quick survey to share your thoughts on our conference. Thank you for attending!



Schedule of Events

Thursday Schedule – March 6th

3:00 pm – Arrival & registration
5:30 pm – Dinner
7:00 pm – Storytelling

Friday Schedule – March 7th

8:00 am – Breakfast
9:00 am – Breakout sessions
10:30 am – Breakout sessions
12:00 pm – Lunch
1:00 pm – Keynote speaker
2:00 pm – Breakout sessions
3:30 pm – Breakout sessions
5:00 pm – Dinner
7:00 pm – Movie
Singing Back the Buffalo

Saturday Schedule – March 8th

8:00 am – Breakfast
9:00 am – Breakout sessions
10:30 am – Breakout sessions
12:00 pm – Lunch
1:00 pm – Keynote speaker
2:00 pm – Breakout sessions
3:30 pm – Breakout sessions
5:00 pm – Dinner
7:00 pm – Entertainment
Minnesota MixDown Jam

Sunday Schedule – March 9th

8:00 am – Breakfast
11:30 am – Check out

Please see the agenda insert for more details

Youth Track

Friday Schedule – March 7th

8:00 am – Breakfast
12:00 pm – Lunch
1:00 pm – Drum making
5:00 pm – Dinner
7:00 pm – Movie
Singing Back the Buffalo

Saturday Schedule – March 8th

8:00 am – Breakfast
9:00 am – 4H making what we can with what we have
12:00 pm – Lunch & 4H presentation
1:00 pm – Keynote speaker
2:00 pm – Hand games
5:00 pm – Dinner
7:00 pm – Entertainment
Minnesota MixDown Jam

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Christina Gish Hill – Keynote speaker

Christina Gish Hill received her PhD from the University of Minnesota in American Studies. Her research combines the ethnographic methodology and theory of Anthropology and the archival research methods of history to study socio-political organization and the expression of sovereignty in American Indian communities. She has worked with the Northern Cheyenne in Montana, gathering oral histories and learning about kinship practices.

Hill's most recent research on food sovereignty reveals how social relationships not only effect how people work to access specific landscapes, but how they relate to the wider ecosystems that share these landscapes. I am currently exploring the ways that Indigenous corn agriculture, seed breeding, and broader food systems have acted as important mechanisms that Native people have used to assert both cultural identity and political autonomy.

Recent publications include: 2024 National Parks, Native Sovereignty: Experiments in Collaboration and 2017 Webs of Kinship: Family in Northern Cheyenne Nationhood.

Grants and awards include: 2023 Collaborative Research: Towards resilient water infrastructure in Alaska Native communities through knowledge co-production, NNA Research NSF, 1.2 million, 2022 Building Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change in Alaska Native Communities by Reducing Health Risks from Water Infrastructure, Quality, and Security, EPA STAR, 1.35 million, and 2020 National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, \$60,000.



Brandon Baity – Keynote speaker

Brandon Baity is a descendant of the White Earth Nation, a leader and advocate for Indigenous community development, serving as the Executive Director of the Indigenous Association in Fargo-Moorhead. A dedicated champion for cultural preservation, sustainable practices, and community empowerment, Brandon has made it his mission to create opportunities that honor Indigenous traditions while building pathways for a vibrant future.

Brandon grew up in Brooklyn Park, MN and currently lives in Moorhead, MN with his 3 children, partner, and mother-in-law. He graduated with a degree in social work from the College of Saint Scholastica in 2013.

Presenters



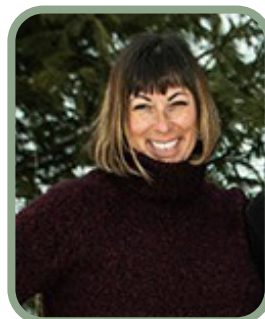
Jane Jewett

Jane Jewett, Associate Director of the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, University of MN. Jane works on sustainable food systems, regionally in Northeast Minnesota and statewide. She co-coordinates Minnesota's Local Food Advisory Committee, is past chair of the Food Innovation Team, participates in the MN Farm to School Leadership Team, and has been part of the Farmers' Market Hubs project since 2017. She is a certified grower trainer for the Food Safety Modernization Act - Produce Safety Rule. Jane also raises grass-fed beef and pastured pork and poultry near Palisade, MN and is a meat vendor at the Grand Rapids, MN Farmers' Market.



Frank Kutka

Frank Kutka has been a faculty member at the College of Menominee Nation since the fall of 2019, where he facilitated the development of a bachelor's degree in Sustainable Agriculture. Frank studied Field Biology at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, he studied Animal Ecology at Iowa State University, and studied plant breeding at Cornell University. After graduation, he was Assistant Director at the Research Extension Center, a State Coordinator for the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program and a co-coordinator for the Farm Breeding Club with farmers from the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society. Frank is also a seed keeper and gardener.



Jen Faulk

Jen Faulk (Oneida Nation) works for the Menominee Tribe's Department of Agriculture & Food Systems as a program coordinator. She has professional experience in environmental health, food safety, tribal administration, and tribal legislation. Her current projects include the Wisconsin Tribal Elder Food Box Program, developing a Menominee Food code, and helping to rebuild Menominee foodways. Jen is married and has a twenty-one-year-old daughter in college, a few dogs, and a menagerie of farm animals. Jen and her husband manage Kahulahele Farmstead, an eight-acre farmstead which focuses on food sovereignty, restorative agriculture, conscious animal husbandry, building community, and resilience through bartering.



Ed Spevak, Ph.D

Ed Spevak, Ph.D., Curator of Invertebrates, Saint Louis Zoo, Director, Center for Native Pollinator Conservation, Dr. Ed Spevak has dedicated the last 44 years of his career to the conservation of invertebrates and vertebrates working in zoos and aquariums as a zoo curator and small population biologist. Ed is the Curator of Invertebrates at the Saint Louis Zoo and is Director of Saint Louis Zoo's WildCare Institute Center for Native Pollinator Conservation (CNPC). Ed and the Saint Louis Zoo helped to establish the IUCN SSC Bumble Bee Specialist Group (now the Wild Bee, Specialist Group). Ed and the Zoo also helped establish the Honey Bee Health Coalition, Farmers for Monarchs and Missourians for Monarchs Collaborative.

Ed is also a member of the Science Advisory Council of Field to Market looking at biodiversity issues in the sustainable agriculture chain. Ed, through the CNPC, has developed a program called Native Foods, Native Peoples, Native Pollinators focused on food security, food sovereignty and pollinator Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) SAFE (Saving Animals From Extinction) North American Bison program.

Breakout Sessions

Alexander Room I | Friday, March 7

- 9:00 am ***Farm Agency Service – Presenter. Kayla Mattson***
Farm Loan and Farm Program team members will present high level information about FSA, our loans, and programs. Following the brief presentation, there will be a round table for open discussion with the participants regarding questions that they have regarding FSA loan and other programs
- 10:30 am ***Food Regulatory – Presenters: Jane Jewett***
This session will bring forth information about the landscape of food regulation in Minnesota, and how it affects the ability of tribal members to sell food products they grow, gather, or make. The information presented is from “Blazing Trails through the Jungle of Food Regulation” project that is currently led by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, Minnesota Farmer’s Market Association and the University of Minnesota Extension. There will be open discussion about how tribal members can navigate the complex food regulatory system and discuss tribal food codes that would smooth the path for tribal members to and sell food in Minnesota.
- 12:00 pm **Lunch**
- 1:00 pm ***Keynote Speaker Dr. Christina Gish Hill: Power to Sustain Through Changing Times: The Resiliency of Indigenous Agriculture***
Native nations throughout the region are pursuing Indigenous Food Sovereignty as a way to bolster their communities. An important component of food sovereignty for many nations is strengthening their traditional Indigenous agricultural practices. This talk addresses some powerful ways that Native communities have worked to create both climate and political resiliency in their own food systems, like conserving seeds, finding ways to steward healthy foods, restoring ecosystems, and building strong community networks. The talk also emphasizes the power of networks within a community, among Native nations, and beyond to strengthen the wide ranging work of building food sovereign Native nations.
- 2:00 pm ***Renewing Our Relationships With Northern Flint Corn – Presenter. Frank Kutka***
This session will compare two dozen regional varieties from the USDA Plant Introduction Station for field characteristics, nutritional quality, and flavor in a participatory experiment with students, community members, and researchers working together as a team. This presentation will highlight how this experiment came out of a student project at CMN, the methods used, the impressive qualities of this important type of corn, and opportunities to others to participate. The practice of forming composite populations will also be discussed along with historical references to this means of strengthening seed corn.
- 3:30 pm ***Mentorship & Technical Assistance Through the Transition to Organic Partnership Program – Presenter. Zachary Paige***
Zachary will be speaking about the Transition to Organic Partnership Program. The Organic Mentorship Program connects producers transitioning to organic practices with experienced organic producers who serve as mentors. These mentors guide Mentees through the transition process and offer valuable insights of their journey into organic farming.
- 7:00 pm ***Movie – Singing Back The Buffalo***

Breakout Sessions

Alexander Room III | Friday, March 7

- 9:00 am : ***Record Keeping For Small Farms – Presenter. Erik Heimark***
Is your farm profitable? Empower your decision making and make your farm more profitable. Keeping good records will help you understand your farms profitability.
- 10:30 am : ***Importance of Indigenous Peoples in Promoting Regenerative Agriculture– Presenter. Friendly Vang - Johnson***
In this session you will learn about the important role of Native-Indigenous peoples in safeguarding water and land, and promoting regenerative agriculture. Through storytelling format, Friendly will recount three spiritual experiences in which she came to understand why Native-Indigenous peoples' leadership is a cornerstone for food sovereignty. She will discuss the policy and community organizing implications of centering and elevating Native-Indigenous farmers and food systems. This presentation is a letter of love, encouragement, and honor for all Native-Indigenous farmers from a Hmong Shaman, our ancestors, and Mother Earth.
- 12:00 pm : **Lunch**
- 1:00 pm : ***Keynote Speaker Dr. Christina Gish Hill***
Located in the Alexander Room I
- 2:00 pm : ***Creating Positive Change Through Kai (Food) – Presenter. Sheree Janke-Waitoa***
This panel will share traditional farming practices that have been passed down for hundreds of years and utilize environmental markers to apply these methods. The team will demonstrate how song and dance are incorporated into mahinga kai (food gathering practice) and what positive effect it has had on Indigenous students at Lincoln University NZ. Te Ao Maori worldview is based on environmental indicators that mark seasons and weather patterns, preparing communities for the year ahead and what Kai (food) will be bountiful. These presenters together share their knowledge of traditional practices passed down for over 800 years working with the environment. Their dedicated work developing the next generation of Maori & Pasific peoples continues to grow.
- 3:30 pm : ***Cannabis Breeding & Selection of Elite Cannabis Mother Plants – Presenter. Clemen Dabney***
This seminar will educate attendees on the process of breeding cannabis and selecting elite mother plants to optimize genetic traits. The session aims to bridge the gap between traditional breeding practices and modern advancements in cannabis cultivation, emphasizing the importance of genetic selection for achieving consistency, potency, and quality in commercial production.
- 7:00 pm : ***Movie – Singing Back The Buffalo***
Located in the Alexander Room I

Breakout Sessions

Alexander Room I | Saturday, March 8

- 9:00 am : ***Climate as a Living Process – Presenter: Jim Chamberlin***
This session will share recent research of this living perception of climate, including how the influence of human behavior on landscapes could be perceived as the dominant driver of climate change and how regenerating our landscapes, soils, and water cycles could be our most powerful step forward to safely cool our atmospheres, while reconnecting with that which sustains us. This session will create space to share reflections, questions and critiques of the interpretation.
- 10:30 am : ***Grassroots Bioremediation Project – Presenters: Leanna Goose & Kaylee Camahan***
During this session, we will be talking about the plants, fungi, and microorganisms that we will be working with to heal the land and water; along with our strategy for working with governmental bodies and how we are engaging the local community. The data and techniques applied in this project will also be used to share with other grassroots Indigenous Communities facing industrial pollution.
- 12:00 pm : **Lunch**
- 1:00 pm : ***Keynote Speaker Brandon Baity: Nurturing Cultural Unity Bonds: Lessons in Growing Community Through Collaboration & Tradition***
In this thought-provoking session, Brandon Baity, Executive Director of the Indigenous Association, will share insights from his work in the Fargo-Moorhead area to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge to Indigenous youth and the broader community. Through collaborative efforts with local partners, these initiatives weave traditional wisdom into contemporary contexts, fostering a deep connection to heritage while addressing the evolving needs of the community.
- 2:00 pm : ***Seed Exchange***
- 3:30 pm : ***Learning From & With Maize & Fostering its Health & Our Health – Presenter: Walter Goldstein***
During this workshop, we will to foster insight, interest and activity working with maize (and its natural microbial allies) to produce delicious food and vibrant healthy seed and culture. That includes talking with people about maize, how it grows, and sharing experiences learning how to read it and grow and select it from year to year. Everyone is invited to bring their corn to show and to talk about it.
- 7:00 pm : **Minnesota MixDown Jam Session**
Bring your instrument and voice!

Breakout Sessions

Alexander Room III | Saturday, March 8

- 9:00 am : ***The Great Lakes Intertribal Food Coalition – Presenter. Jen Faulk***
The Great Lakes Intertribal Food Coalition is an organization working in food sovereignty efforts. GLIFC supports Indigenous food producers with training, education, and funding support, GLIFC's flagship program is the Wisconsin Tribal Elder Food Box. This presentation will review the TEFBP, how to become a TEFBP grower, and how GLIFC and the Great Lakes Rural Food Business Center can support Indigenous food producers.
- 10:30 am : ***Intergenerational Engagement of the Onodaga Nation Leadership, School, & Cornell Botanic Gardens Partnership – Presenter. Gracekelly Fulton***
In this talk, we will share the process and outcomes of planning, designing, and planting a garden of native plants to facilitate Indigenous teaching methods. We will also discuss the significance and variety of usages of plants included in the garden.
- 12:00 pm : **Lunch**
- 1:00 pm : ***Keynote Speaker Brandon Baity***
Located in the Alexander Room I
- 2:00 pm : ***Basketry & Climate: A Workshop on Traditional Skills & Modern Challenges – Cristina***
This workshop will explore the impacts of climate change on Indigenous producers in Minnesota, drawing upon the latest climate projections for the state. Participants will gain an understanding of how changing weather patterns, extreme events, and shifts in growing seasons are likely to affect traditional food systems, agricultural practices, and cultural traditions. The workshop will go beyond traditional presentations. Through hands-on Cherokee basket weaving activities, participants will learn valuable lessons in adaptation and resilience. By engaging in this traditional craft, participants will gain a deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of humans and the environment, innovation, and community-based solutions.
- 3:30 pm : ***What Do The People Want? Organically Developing a Successful Food Sovereignty and Conservation Initiative with and for Native American Communities – Presenter. Ed Spevak, Ph.D***
A key to conservation success is supporting communities that live with and depend upon wildlife and nature and that success depends upon understanding the needs and wants of people in the community. In this talk, we will discuss the development of food sovereignty and conservation efforts with and for Native American communities that developed through discussions and understanding their needs and wants with examples from the Native Foods Native Peoples Native Pollinators initiative and the AZA SAFE North American Bison program.
- 7:00 pm : **Minnesota MixDown Jam Session**
Bring your instrument and voice!

Culture & Demonstrations

Alexander Room II | Friday, March 7

- 9:00 am : ***Birch Bark Quilling***
Presenter: Dana Trickey
- 10:30 am : ***Birch Bark Quilling***
Presenter: Dana Trickey
- 12:00 pm : **Lunch**
- 1:00 pm : ***Keynote Speaker Dr. Christina Gish Hill***
Located in the Alexander Room I
- 2:00 pm : ***Corn Husk Dolls***
Presenter: Alicia Avilla
- 3:30 pm : ***White Earth Clay***
Presenters: Janet & Eliza Klarer

Alexander Room II | Saturday, March 8

- 9:00 am : ***Birch Bark Biting***
Presenter: Lera Hephner
- 10:30 am : ***Food is Medicine***
Presenters: Luke & Linda Black Elk
- 12:00 pm : **Lunch**
- 1:00 pm : ***Keynote Speaker Brandon Baity***
Located in the Alexander Room I
- 2:00 pm : ***Red Willow Dream Catchers***
Presenter: Janet & Eliza Klarer
- 3:30 pm : ***Medicinal Tree Teachings***
Presenter: Terri LaDuke

Thank you!

On behalf of the Great Lakes Indigenous Farming Conference planning team, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who played a role in making this event such a success. Your collective efforts have made a lasting impact on the conference, and the strength of this event truly reflects the hard work and dedication you all put in. It's because of your passion, energy, and commitment that we were able to create an experience that was both meaningful and memorable for all involved.

We would like to personally thank Peggy, Audrey, Cassidy, Theodore, Taylor, Terry, Larissa, and Janet. Each of you demonstrated exceptional dedication and professionalism throughout the planning and execution of this conference. Your unwavering support, tireless efforts, and attention to detail has ensured that everything will run smoothly, and your contributions went above and beyond expectations. We recognize and deeply appreciate the time and energy you invested in making this event such a success.

Lastly, we would like to thank everyone who attended the Great Lakes Indigenous Farming Conference. Your participation and engagement make this yearly event a powerful gathering for sharing knowledge and building connections. We appreciate your dedication to supporting Indigenous farming and strengthening our communities. We look forward to continuing this important work together in the future!



Notes

Miigwech (thank you) for attending our conference!

