

Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Federally Recognized Tribe Extension Program Ripple Effects Mapping Findings

The Indian Land Tenure Foundation (ILFT) engaged in a joint collaboration with an evaluation team and the Western Extension Risk Management Education Center to measure the long-term impacts of the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP) serving the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe. In order to collect this information, the evaluation team used a tool called Ripple Effects Mapping (REM). REM is a storytelling technique that is used to collect stories and experiences from community members. The results at the completion of a Ripple Effects Mapping included both a visual map and a set of narratives that were subsequently analyzed.

The data from 31 FRTEP programs was summarized into a final report – *“Mapping FRTEP Impacts in Indian Country”* and published in March 2022 for the purpose of demonstrating the collective value of the programs. This report can be found [Measuring FRTEP's success - Tribal Extension](#).

In June 2021, a virtual Ripple Effects Mapping event was held with Mashantucket Pequot Tribal members and others in the community who benefited from FRTEP programs or were aware of the impact of this programming. Those participating in the online event may have included farmers/ranchers, community members including agency and/or Tribal leadership, high school students, 4-H members, and others. Tribal and community members joined either online or by phone.

During the session, participants had the opportunity to tell us stories about how they have benefited from having FRTEP in their community. A facilitator led the conversation, asking each Tribal and/or community member to share their story one at a time. Questions participants were asked to consider included:

1. *Tell us a story about how one of these programs has had an impact on your tribal community.*
2. *Are you or your family doing anything differently as a result of these programs?*
3. *What has been a personal benefit to you or your family because of these programs?*
4. *What has been the most helpful part of these programs for you, your family, or your tribal community?*

As individuals spoke, their stories were both recorded and mapped into digital mapping software in order to visually display the impact. No individual's names are included in this data set or the final report mentioned above. Following the REM, those stories were analyzed using the FRTEP priority program areas to determine the ways in which the FRTEP has impacted the Tribe and surrounding community. Additionally, the data was also analyzed to understand ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on programming.

This report includes all of the stories collected from the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe.

- Page 2 shows examples of ways you can use this information.
- Page 3 summarizes in themes and subthemes the ways in which the FRTEP program and you as the FRTEP educator/agent had impact in your tribal community.
- Pages 4-10 includes these themes and all of the stories collected from your REM event.
- Page 11 is an image of the full REM Map, which is also attached as a PDF for reprinting. Additionally, a laminated poster of your REM MAP is being mailed to you, to share with community members, Tribal leaders and others vested in your programs.

If you would like to have an opportunity to discuss in further detail and/or have questions, we can set up a Zoom meeting with one of the Ripple Effects Mapping team members.

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How you can use your Ripple Effects Mapping data:

Storytelling is a powerful technique that can be used in many different ways. Your stories from REM helped us understand the impacts and value of FRTEP that can be shared with funders, Tribal members and leadership. More than numbers, stories can reveal needs, achievements, and emotional real-life impacts. Your story examples can be used multiple ways to elevate the importance of the work that you are doing and to demonstrate the collective impact that it is having in your community.

Here are three ways you can use the two edited story examples (below) while also utilizing the report's themes and subthemes to demonstrate the impacts this program is having:

Within the Community

- Stories can be shared or incorporated into community celebrations and/or events.
- Communicated to your Advisory Committee to help build capacity for future programming.

In Reports

- Prepared reports Tribal Council members and other community leaders with story examples, themes and subthemes that show how FRTEP is working to accomplish the priority areas established by the Tribal Advisory Council; and which relay the benefits, impacts and other indicators of success as a result of FRTEP.
- Prepared reports for your 1862 Land Grant University or your 1994 Tribal College or University leadership with story examples embedded and that include the themes and sub themes from each of the program's priority areas. Highlight how the Ripple Effects Mapping session empowered community members to share their stories and the benefits inherent in discovering the successes brought about by the program.

In Grant Applications

- Having a solid evaluation plan is critical to writing a successful grant application. Including outcomes from the Ripple Effects Mapping demonstrates the long-lasting impacts of FRTEP and uses a culturally appropriate approach to do so.

In summary, the stories and data that you have collected through the Ripple mapping process can be used many different ways to communicate your successes and to elevate your program not only at the community level – but also to your stakeholder partners, collaborators and other individuals, organizations and entities, for the purpose of strengthening and building the capacity of FRTEP.

Themes and Subthemes

For the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe and community, the impacts, effects, and benefits could all be found within the following five program priority areas and subthemes are listed here. On pages 4-10, you will see the same priority areas, subthemes with individual stories collected directly from the transcript.

1. American Indian Cultural and Linguistic Preservation

- Engaging Adults in Tribal Traditions
- FRTEP Agent Respect for and Engagement in Tribal Traditions

2. Indian Community Development Around Economic and Workforce Enhancement

- Economic Development

3. Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management

- Support for Farmers

4. Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction

- Adult Involvement
- Community Involvement
- Education
- Healthy Food Choices
- Traditional foods

5. Tribal Youth and 4-H

- Gardening & Nutrition
- Social Connections & Community Engagement

Response to COVID

- Adaptation of Programs and Services

Overall

- Cultural Understanding and Respect

Themes, Subthemes and Stories

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
American Indian Cultural and Linguistic Preservation	Engaging Adults in Tribal Traditions	I help out with the farm with [others]. And I just started a little bit ago and I'm learning so much right now with all this planting and gardening and taking care of the plants, knowing what to do. Working with the plants, helping out and stuff like that and learning about all new stuff I haven't learned before. I know what's healthier than other things. And I'm also being very grateful to help out with this land and stuff like that. Because I help out a lot with the culture and stuff like that. And I also help out with my little siblings, tell them what the language is and what certain stuff about that my mom and dad have been teaching me for years now. And actually dance at the pow wows and stuff like that, which is really great.
American Indian Cultural and Linguistic Preservation	FRTEP Agent Respect for and Engagement in Tribal Traditions	There are still some bridges to bridge with UConn, one of the more obvious and really seeing where his efforts within the cultural garden could land within the bigger program. Especially now that we've been able to work it out with Parks & Rec and they'll be offering some structure with the garden and efforts with the children being hands-on, et cetera.
Indian Community Development Around Economic and Workforce Enhancement	Economic Development	Part of what [Extension employee / Tribal member] did is build a team around himself to actually support the efforts within the part-time positions. [The agent] was able to work with [Extension employee / Tribal member] to get us the two part-time positions, the Tribe committed to providing [Extension employee / Tribal member] some full-time tribal member positions that would help support that workload. They actually grow [at] one location, the biggest locations actually off Reservation in Stonington, Connecticut. We use that for both purposes, we'll grow stuff there and the maple syrup, lettuce and tomatoes will actually be sold to the [casino]. What we did with the produce there this year [and] prior to COVID, we'd have it available at our pow wow. People want to come and buy some of the corn, some of the squash, and a lot of the vendors would buy their ingredients from us.
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for Farmers	FRTEP came in and helped us buy equipment and got me two part-time employees, which was very helpful. Then we got the Extension where we can any questions, because we've never really grown in a controlled environment before, we've always grown outside traditionally. [The agent] and UConn has been helping us grow in these controlled environments because it can be tough, especially with pest and bugs.

Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for Farmers	<p>[The agent] provided technical assistance over the phone and they also did a vegetable class for the community. It was right before COVID we ended, we probably only started off with about four tribal members showing up on a weekly basis or biweekly basis. And then we actually had an event where we invited people up to the farm, things like that. Then we started getting some real good traction, [the agent] used to bring in the actual equipment that allowed people to click different answers, the education was community-based when people that want to garden in their own yard, as well as to the employees through the UConn program. In addition to that, [Extension employee / Tribal member] has been given a team to help with agriculture and we'll fund that through the Tribe's budget.</p>
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for Farmers	<p>Before the program I didn't really know too much about agriculture, but just as time goes on like just over the past few months, I've learned so much about just taking care of plants and everything that has to do with plants. I think that goes back to cultural benefits and going back to just regular traditions. I think that would be a high benefit for me personally. I'm mostly on the farm, so just helping the vegetables grow, planting the vegetables, just about anything that has to do with them. Just maintaining them. This part of a commercial venture that feeds the tribe and community. It could be a cross between both. It could go either way.</p>
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Adult Involvement	<p>My agricultural experience predates all these young people on the call. As I got involved in the agricultural project that's been going on for a few years now, I just want to relate how that goes back to my youth if I could start there. as when we were taking classes with [the agent] and learning how to test the soil and how to mitigate weeds and pesticides and those sort of things, it kind of threw me back to when I was a young girl working on the reservation in the tribal garden with my great-grandmother.</p>
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Community Involvement	<p>We've seen it in them as well as some of their older siblings and parents. We have an event called Pequot Day where we bring together the two people at Tribes within Connecticut to remember that we're one family, et cetera. We put together 50 seed kits (prior to COVID) and did a giveaway, between both Tribes. Those seed kits went so fast that we had to put together another 100 seed kits.</p> <p>We used to ship them in the mail. We handed out about over 200... counting other Tribes as well. We also put together packages for some of our sister Tribes and we sent that out for them to distribute to different families that may</p>

		be in need, interested in their own garden or some of the tribes that have community gardens.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Community Involvement	The community garden that they started with the kids and the bigger community garden off of foxtails brings back those memories as well. Because it was a group effort, it was a community effort and that's what it really takes to be successful.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Education	I think [the agent taught] 15 of us, maybe even the elders were involved, the youth were involved, cultural resources. Just tribal members that were interested. It was a very diverse group that were taking the classes. I still have my binder and I did learn a lot between pesticides and herbicides. And I think one of our tribal youth had to go get certified in that.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Education	I think [the agent taught] 15 of us, maybe even the elders were involved, the youth were involved, cultural resources. Just tribal members that were interested. It was a very diverse group that were taking the classes. I still have my binder and I did learn a lot between pesticides and herbicides. And I think one of our tribal youth had to go get certified in that.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Education	I found it interesting that the color of the type of covering you put on the ground, whether it be black or white which was more effective and why it was more effective. The clear plastic and black was more important. And then I learned, nowadays you can buy rolls of built-in irrigation and those things now instead of standing there with a water hose or having a tower. So that was all really good stuff. The same weed control actually is now, multiple. So it's reusable.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Healthy Food Choices	Started off doing the maple syrup and then wanting to go into agriculture because I've seen all these trucks coming in with the produce to the reservation, the Foxwoods and stuff like that. And I'm like, "Man, we should be really capturing some [if those] dollars." I wanted to bring agriculture back and make sure that the kids and the future generations know about sustainability and growing our own food and never losing that. Now here we are, we got the FRTEP program and four greenhouses later and 600 and something blueberries and raspberries and acres of corn. We're really ramped up the agricultural part because of the FRTEP. That helped us out a lot with the funding. And now we're actually working with the IHS department and we're giving out prescriptions for vegetables, for people that have diabetes. They're able to bring those prescriptions to the farm stand and we give them vegetables, that are allowed in within the

		<p>program of the prescription. We're bringing in money that way now, too. And then the kids are just taken on and the community is really just taken on to the agriculture and everybody's wanting to get involved. Now, everybody's doing gardens.</p>
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Healthy Food Choices	<p>That is an important cultural connection, but it's also important for health reasons. One of the things we talked about in our breakout group was how important it is for our people specifically, but for all people in general to be able to track their food from farm to table and know what pesticides and what fertilizers and what preservatives are or are not being used. Given the health impacts of such things upon us being greater than the average American, we need to watch them even more closely. This enables us to do that with any of the food that [Tribal member] brings to our farm stand from our own tribal lands. One of the benefits that is obvious from resuming our connection to the land is folks actually being able to buy fresh produce at reasonable rates. Despite having one of the largest gaming enterprises on earth, our reservation is still a food desert. You can buy a head of lettuce in Mashantucket, you cannot buy tomatoes unless [Tribal member] brings them to you. And that's a shame.</p>
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Traditional foods	<p>The benefit that has occurred to the Tribal nation through [the agent], staff and other folks who in turn have supported the cultural department and allowed the opportunity for us to put together the new cultural garden so quickly in the culture grounds. It is now currently growing with heirloom seeds. Now, it has a white cap corn growing original Connecticut field pumpkins. We have nutmeg squash growing. We have a small local, traditional sunflower growing and a traditional field watermelon and then also traditional cranberry beans from the area. I'd like to advance that and have a larger variety of traditional seeds, building a seed bank is really vital for moving forward. These sorts of opportunities are supported through obviously the farm support and efforts that have come from your programming.</p>
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Traditional foods	<p>For Tribal community impact, I would point to the ability to reconnect Pequot to their own land. Over the last four decades or so the most consistent agricultural activity in the tribal community has surrounded syrup and the sugar shack. For the longest period of time, that was the only agricultural activity. When I was a teenager in this tribal community early to mid 1980s, we were raising syrup, raising pigs and lettuce and also doing syrup. The tribe found out the hard way about the grip of organized crime upon produce markets, because we had nowhere to sell our syrup when those folks decided that we shouldn't. And shortly after that</p>

		the lettuce and pig operations went by the wayside and maple syrup was pretty much the only agricultural activity until recent years when [Tribal members] and others have actually allowed people to reconnect to their land and understand that it can feed them as it did for a 100 generations before they were born.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Traditional foods	I noticed that people tend to like the syrup that we have on Mashantucket more than syrups that are your common household syrup. And the same with vegetables, but the most popular that I've noticed personally is the syrup people like the syrup more and pumpkins those two. And pumpkins. It's mostly [other participants] teaching me as we go. And as time goes on, you just get good at it.
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Gardening & Nutrition	We started down at the CDC in 2016 with a kid's garden, pre-kindergarten age. You could tell it's going to start raining, but they started planting and there's enough for everybody to have one more plant to plant. We told them they could without asking the teachers just to film it, it'd be all right. Next thing you know, it starts raining and the kids will not leave until they get to plant their last plant. That's the level of commitment with the younger ones, which was pretty cool. Another pretty cool impact: there was a child, one of our younger cousins who was shy in a lot of the classroom settings. And the teachers even let us know, "She's probably going to be shy." And kind of gave us a heads up. And she was actually the first child that was able to name every variation of the vegetables we had down there. And I believe there was probably about 16 counting the watermelons and pumpkins and things like that. There's probably about 16 things on the herbs, everything that she could actually just name without a question. She knew a 100% what she was looking at.
Response to COVID	Adaptation of Programs and Services	During the whole COVID experience (almost a year and a half) our cultural resource department has been very active on social media doing live demonstrations, Zoom discussions, artwork and other things. One of the areas that [Tribal member] has been passionate about and very consistent with has been farming itself, sharing online in some of our Facebook pages the different farming techniques that he uses personally, as well as cooking. He had a series of cooking classes taking things right out of the garden. He may use some of the maple syrup from the farm, et cetera and then he'll do a two-hour cooking class with the family. Being able to provide the ingredients, they'll pick it up and then they'll join him two days later on actual Zoom or on Facebook Live and he'll do a cooking classes from what was grown. He's also done medicinal plant demonstrations and things like that. So there's a lot of efforts within the

		Tribe just to kind of show our commitment and to do our part, that's our support in this program overall.
Response to COVID	Adaptation of Programs and Services	That's the economic benefit. From a community standpoint, this year, [a Tribal member's] team bagged up vegetables consistently every time there was a harvest, they bag up vegetables and make them as even as possible. Then we let the membership know, "Hey, anybody that needs face mask gloves, come get them. And when you're there make sure you stop by the food stand, they'll have a bag of fruit for you and vegetables." We really wanted to focus on the family and make sure that people had some good food to eat. And we still made some money off of [the casino]. But the real focus was making sure people could eat healthy during COVID.
Overall	Cultural Understanding and Respect	Internally we have farming efforts led by [Extension employee / Tribal member] and the Extension is one of the components of that. And what UConn did is a good story in itself, as far as a success story. When we first got going UConn, as well as the Tribe wanted to ensure a level of two way education with some of the cultural being a foundation to some of what we do. Every year we at the very least do a three sisters garden. We may even add a fourth sister and explain from a traditional standpoint the different farming techniques, things like that. So that's part of every year. And then just based on that relationship, we've acted more as partners, guiding the opportunity from a tribal standpoint, working with UConn.
Overall	Cultural Understanding and Respect	We more or less manage, the opportunity under both [the agent] and [Extension employee / Tribal member's] leadership. [The agent] representing UConn, [Extension employee / Tribal member] representing the Nation and it's been a model that actually USDA highlighted as a success in itself. They said that other Tribes were having a lot of issues. Some of the Tribes were having issues feeling undervalued with the relationship with the university. That's one thing that we've done from day one is we positioned UConn and the Tribal Nation as partners, both having a say in the direction that we go in and being able to rely on one another. As a practical matter, [Extension employee / Tribal member] is the source of technical support for all of us in the Tribal community for agriculture and all outside organizations, whether it be UConn or beyond. [Extension employee / Tribal member] is able to have more or less or at least as close as we can get to a full-time focus upon these issues. The rest of us who are involved tend to be involved on an as needed basis. And he does these things every day and

		therefore is our only everyday resource as a tribal community.
Overall	Cultural Understanding and Respect	We have a new employee now, who has a real good understanding of our culture. New to farming, definitely willing to be hands-on, but he's going to add a lot of value, he knows a lot. And what he's comfortable to talk [about]. I know we'll all be learning from him, especially ways that we could connect our cultural activity with the farming effort.
Overall	Cultural Understanding and Respect	The one point that I would want to make is that we haven't really focused upon is the cultural value that the community gets from what [Extension employee / Tribal member] and [the agent] and [[Tribal member] and all these folks do. In the past several years, we've been able to do our green corn dance with corn actually grown on the reservation. We've been able to do our strawberry moon and strawberry harvest songs and dances with strawberries actually grown on the reservation. So, what this does for the authenticity of our cultural traditions, can't be overstated. And again, you other guys, primarily [others] and [the agent] and many others, who helped to make that all possible. For those of us in the cultural resources department, that is probably the biggest single gift from this set of relationships. We now have young people in their early teens who have always [had] this happen, and it will become normal for them again.

