

Fort Peck 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 Fort Peck 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 Fort Peck 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 Fort Peck 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 4-11 includes these themes and all of the stories collected from your REM event.
- Page 12 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 Fort Peck 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 4-11, you will see the same priority areas, subthemes with individual stories collected directly from the transcript.

1. Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management

- Support for Farmers
- Support for Ranchers

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

- Adult Involvement
- Family Involvement
- Healthy Food Choices
- Youth Involvement

3. Natural Resource Conservation and Bio-energy Development

- Sustainability Efforts

4. Tribal Youth and 4-H

- Tribal Culture

Overall

- Approachability
- Embedded in the Community

Themes, Subthemes and Stories

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for Farmers	Producers look forward to these, the farmers are answers. They get to come together and visit about what they're doing and what works for them and what doesn't. We get to provide them with a little bit of insight and ideas and brainstorming together. Basically, just to make the agriculture on the reservation as good as it can be. Farmers have been more productive, but it's not just about being more productive, it's about being better stewards of the land. A lot of times increased management and being a better steward of the land results in more production. To get them to turn that corner and introduce it in a way that's not threatening, that's kind of a gift. And so that's what we try to do, is show them how better management and being a better steward can lead to more money. As a result, we just ordered 100 releases of leafy spurge beetles, that will cover about 600 acres. To me that is the result of a program that we've started, and it's become a big issue. Leafy spurge is something that we struggle with here and when you're talking about treating 600 acres with 100 releases of bugs, that's a big deal. It's a really big deal.
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for Farmers	I want to add about the weed education and how the signs have educated our permittees on the weeds and how they report the weeds now to us. Now we know where we have to release our bugs, when I started working here and none of our permittees did that, except for one. And now we have multiple permittees calling and telling us they have different kinds of weeds. We try to get bugs for them to get the weeds under control. [The agent] helps with the pesticide points and with the state and federal licenses, we have one of our employees is a licensed sprayer and she helps with them maintaining their points to keep their license intact.
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for Ranchers	[The films] focus on is basically ... I'm going to put this as plain as I can, but I get a chance to go around and talk a lot about what we do around the country and the topic of my talk is how to get shit done. And so that's basically what coming out to see is that we basically turned Buffalo Ranch, for example, into an initial project that brought 66 herd of buffalo and put it on 5,500 acres. Now we've got over 600 head on over 27,000 acres. They're coming to look at that and how ... basically they're coming to see how we work together and how we've accomplished what we've

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
		accomplished. They'll all be on YouTube, type in the Fort Peck Tribes Buffalo, you'll see some of those videos.
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for Ranchers	[The agent] has a good understanding of ranching and the importance of maintaining grass and those types of things. We've had an ag pulse series and developed a series of Tribal training sessions, and we bring in ranchers, farmers, it's very specific, so they know what they're coming to. Ranch management, grass management, rotational grazing, soil health and crop rotations, how they fit into Tribal land use policy. There's more to it than just education, it's education on land use policy and how it fits into our ARMP. We've worked together quite a bit with that type of stuff, there's almost so much to talk about that you can't cover it all. I guess that's a good thing, and probably not fair to [the agent], there's just so much that happens here that doesn't happen anywhere else.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Adult involvement	More people are starting to garden [with the Tribal Extension garden project]. We've provided container project workshops, getting people involved, we've done the Master Gardener Project, getting younger generation involved in gardening. [The benefit] is healthier eating, more activity, getting out and exercising and bonding. I started my own garden at home and learning to garden. This has personally benefited me not only our clientele, but me personally.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Adult involvement	What I've seen out of the classes that I've taken is just bringing people in the community together, who might not otherwise know that each other garden. It's not something that's super well-known if you garden or if you don't. I've just met a ton of the people who I knew already, but I just didn't know that they garden. I've been learning a ton from other people in my community. I think that's one of the really awesome things about doing these community-wide events for adults. [The agent] does great work with kids, but the classes with the adults give us that opportunity to meet and to talk about gardening. It creates a space for that.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Family involvement	My experience with Extension is as a participant in the community. We are a small community and so we know a lot of people, but never knew who was a gardener and who wasn't. By going to her workshops I saw people that I knew,

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
		<p>but didn't know that they had a garden or didn't know how much they knew about gardening. It was a way to get to know people in a new way, and to see how much awesome information they have. My mom was a gardener my whole life, but she never grew vegetables, she has an awesome flower garden in her yard and in her backyard, but she had never grown vegetables. When I graduated from school and came home, I decided that I wanted to grow vegetables and flowers, and so I did. Now, my mom grows vegetables probably better than I do because she's great. I just decided that I wanted to do it, and so now we both do together.</p>
<p>Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction</p>	<p>Healthy Food Choices</p>	<p>Five years ago, a few of us wanted to start a community garden. We got in touch with the community services program, and they had a space that we could use that had water. We just told people that spaces were available, marked out the spaces and started helping people get started. This is the fifth year, and the first year in this position as the coordinator, I am gardening about 2,500 square feet up at the community garden. Most of that will provide the vegetables and food for the elders program. I think that our health promotion disease prevention program is going to use some of them for a demonstration in nutritional classes. We're going to work with them to get some of those classes done. In addition to the community garden space we have, [the agent] found us three acres just north of town that we've got a big area of corn and potatoes that are in now, but we're going to be getting a couple high tunnels that we'll be gardening in hopefully next year as well. This project would not have started if it wasn't for [the agent]. We have to give her the credit and starting the new project coordinator position this year.</p>
<p>Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction</p>	<p>Youth Involvement</p>	<p>Tribal Elves started a couple Christmases ago and we've continued doing volunteer work. We wanted to do a community garden. [The agent] provided most of the stuff and let us know what we need to do, how to get it going. It's going very well. The kids are enjoying it. It's a lot of work, but [the agent] walks us through that. We were hesitant because of where we live, we have a lot of very unsupervised children. But they've been very respectful of it so far, they're actually very eager if they see us out there, they come over and ask, want to help pull weeds and water and ask what's growing. So, it's really good for our community. [The agent] works really well with all the kids</p>

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		<p>in our community, she makes a point to be involved is a big thing. Around here that's a big thing, because there's people that just will not be involved with the community with the youth or anybody. So, anyone that makes a point to get out and be involved in community is great around here.</p>
<p>Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction</p>	<p>Youth Involvement</p>	<p>[The agent] asked if I might be interested in a project with my family consumer sciences classes. I was interested in doing a foods program. I did the background education with my students and all enrolled kids, from first period all the way to seventh period. Everyone did a block unit in my class and the first year we did sausage making with using pork butts. [The agent] provided all of the meat, equipment, spices, the casing, the freezer paper, and I provided the freezers. The kids loved it. It was hands-on and our society has gotten so removed from the sources of where our food comes from, and the fact of how much has done from source to finish. And so, they had very good support throughout the project from cutting the meat to grinding the meat, to then chilling it, seasoning it, regrinding it, putting it, setting up the sausage making putting the casing on the sausage maker, making a pound and a half links, wrapping it in freezer paper. [The agent] asks open-ended questions. She doesn't give them the answers, but she'll ask. And sometimes with our kids they're generally not too open to sharing, but once you get them connected with doing something, an activity, and then it's a pathway to open up and then they start talking and sharing amongst themselves, and then they're more likely to talk with whomever is there. I have to say that they've been very, very well behaved. They packaged with freezer paper, they wrapped them up, we divided them into teams. They had a fun team name and we put a team name and a date on the packages, and then we store them in our freezers. Once they were frozen, they could take them home to their families or to whomever they wanted in the community. They couldn't sell them.</p>
<p>Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction</p>	<p>Youth Involvement</p>	<p>The following year, we did a bison unit. Because we learned so much and the kids were so excited about the process of making more sausage with the bison, I did the whole background with the cultural significance, what type of nutritional and resources and all the materials, nothing was wasted from the buffalo. The migratory, the impact on the Plains Native Americans. We did a big historical cultural</p>

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		unit, and then [the agent] procured the bison butts from the Tribal herd and brought them in. The kids loved it, they made their sausages and we had a few of them that were left in the freezer.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Youth Involvement	During the Christmas program my family consumer science students cut up the sausage links and put them into a very zesty liquid base. It smelled really good during the day before the Christmas program. We bought different cheeses and made appetizers and we had three different crockpots with the sausages. The people could choose their different cheeses with toothpicks. They would not let us set up before the Christmas program, because nobody would go inside the auditorium. During the break people came out and they came towards our table and with the three crockpots we couldn't keep up with people coming back, "Can I take some of this home?" First we need to feed the people that are here and if we have any leftovers just come back. Of course, we didn't have any leftovers, but the kids they still talk about it and they still want to do it.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Youth Involvement	I had probably 80 students, we divided them into teams because we only had so many ... well, I had only so much capacity for, we didn't want to freeze them in my refrigerator. It's a big sliding door refrigerator, but it's ancient and can't cool that much meat. And then after it, we were having a problem and I didn't have an ice machine at the time, but [the agent] got an ice machine now. The grinder would get hot and then instead of grinding the meat, it was melting the fat, and so it wasn't coming out. It was kind of making it into a paste instead of grinding it. We have to go to the athletic trainer and ask if we could use some of his ice. And he treasures his ice for his student athletes after school, so he was not very happy with me. But now I've got my own ice machine and that shouldn't be a problem.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Youth Involvement	We also did the native game animals, Venison Jerky, made with dehydrators. We tried to dry meat, but the kids have gotten so kind of separated from the saltiness. They're used to regular store-bought jerky and that flavor, and so dry meat doesn't have that salt in that preservative flavor. It's a way of demonstrating to learn the skills so that you can do this yourself and share it with the community.

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
Natural Resource Conservation and Bio-energy Development	Sustainability Efforts	We go all around the country to talk about what we've accomplished here. The first part of next month, we have a USDA film crew coming out from Washington DC to film a success story here, on how we've managed our natural resources. This will be the third time they've done it in the last seven years. It's been very successful and we couldn't have done it without [the agent's] outreach, she's a part of a very integral team here that works to get all these things done.
Natural Resource Conservation and Bio-energy Development	Sustainability Efforts	We worked with APHIS and spent all the money they had available to the Western United States for reservations to get signs put up of noxious weeds on all the range units, so people know what to look for noxious weeds. To tell the difference between hemp and marijuana because we were getting into hemp production here. Sometimes people confuse it, and law enforcement gets calls for illegal plants; these signs will benefit the whole community, not just the farmers and ranchers, because everybody has access to the Tribal and federal land on the reservation. Everybody will have that information available to them.
Natural Resource Conservation and Bio-energy Development	Sustainability Efforts	We had the first working ARMP in the country. It took a year or so to get it implemented and the Tribe had to adopt it and be willing to work on it. And its' the baseline for what we do and how we take care of our natural resources.
Natural Resource Conservation and Bio-energy Development	Sustainability Efforts	We got a couple thousand signs that our natural resources department helps put up, and we got posters and things for the schools so that the kids can see the things that we're presenting as well. We put them up in elevators, it's just basically to bring awareness and we'll put them up anywhere where we think our people will have a chance to see them. It's a significant thing when we first started, we really didn't know what to put on, but it turned out really good and I think there's going to be a real benefit.
Natural Resource Conservation and Bio-energy Development	Sustainability Efforts	[The agent and I] have worked on several projects together, probably the biggest one started with the development of an Agricultural Resource Management Plan (ARMP), a series of community meetings where the community determined how they wanted their natural resources taken care of reservation wide. This reservation comprises over two million acres and it is in four different counties. What [the agent] is able to do in a single person office it's widespread and the impact it's had even on my program.

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
		<p>As part of this ARMP, we identify the lands, the major resources and how they want them taken care of. It had to do with increased management to make sure that we weren't doing things like overgrazing or letting noxious weeds overtake things or having too much soil erosion. Once identified, we had to put a plan in place to carry out that plan on behalf of the Fort Peck community. It has resulted in over seven and a half million dollars of federal funds that we've applied for and received to assist us with meeting the goals of the resource management plan to implement things like prescribed grazing, noxious weed control. [The agent] helped me because I'm a one-man office and that's what you're going to find is most everybody here is a one-man office and the FRTEP agent happens to be the hub of all of us. There's not really any of us that could survive or function without that position, without [the agent] doing what she does. And we get things done, but it wouldn't be nearly as good as it is now. She helped put together management opportunities for our local farmers and ranchers as it relates to grazing management accessibility to FSA programs. How to function under drought conditions under where we get fire conditions, she brought back speakers that have been well attended by our community people, by our farmers and ranchers and just helping them into how to make those decisions to help us meet our goals, and weed control, soil health, as it relates to both rangeland and cropland crop diversity. Those are things that I would normally do or NRCS office do but as a one-man office, I just don't have the ability to do that. And so having her here and being able to carry out much of assisting with much of those items, it's been irreplaceable. I'm not sure what we would've done without her doing that. And so, we've been able to ... just to an accomplishment is we have monitoring sites on our range land. We have prescribed grazing plans on over 150,000 acres. It is the single largest project of its kind in Indian country anywhere.</p>
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Tribal Culture	<p>[The agent] also had a program where she processed buffalo meat from our ranch and gave to the elderly which was quite successful. We have a pumpkin patch here for the kids and everybody before me talked a lot about her outreach to kids, but what I see with that is kind of from a different perspective, meaning that she has a way of introducing agriculture to our youth without forcing</p>

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		hardcore ag down their throat. Having a pumpkin patch and seeing how they grow and being able to go out and harvest them and pick them themselves, it introduces them to agriculture, whether they realize it or not.
Overall	Approachability	I gave [the agent] half my office space for a reason. I appreciate the working environment we have, the relationship that we have, and how we get things done. Because the bottom line comes down to is getting things done and we do. I'm not sure we would, had not, we had the working relationship that we have with her office.
Overall	Embedded in the Community	I was hesitant at first because I just love my students because I've earned their trust, but if they don't trust you and you don't find a way to connect with them they're standoffish. There's a few that are very gregarious, but [the agent] has a way of really connecting with them and engaging them. She's a huge asset to our community and our programs.

Image of Ripple Effects Map

