

Fort Belknap 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 Belknap 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 at tribalextension.org/success-stories.

In June 2021, a virtual Ripple Effects Mapping event was held with Fort Belknap 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 Belknap 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 Fort Belknap 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

- 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
- Support for ranchers

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

- Adult involvement
- Community involvement
- Healthy food choices

5. Natural Resource Conservation and Bio-energy Development

- Sustainability efforts

6. Tribal Youth and 4-H

- Gardening and nutrition
- Life skills
- Social connections and community engagement

Response to COVID

- Adaptation of programs and services

Overall

- Consistency
- Diversity and quantity of programs and services
- Quality of staff

Themes, Subthemes and Stories

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
American Indian Cultural and Linguistic Preservation	FRTEP Agent Respect for and Engagement in Tribal Traditions	<p>Long time ago how people survived with fruits and herbs and gardening products, turnips, and stuff like that, we think about these people, we put them where... We are going back into long time ago, and by feeding ourselves and, producing ourselves and teaching others, especially these youth, so that's a good thing. I have a small sweet grass, I don't use no herb, we don't use no kind of pesticides or nothing on anything that we grow.</p> <p>I would like to thank [the agents], they've been there through us through thick and thin, and there isn't a day goes by that, they don't... They're pretty consistent, nobody puts that thing off. That's one thing that I put out there, is you don't cancel for a snowstorm, you don't cancel for anything, you have that event no matter what.</p> <p>And I'm so proud of everybody being on here, because this collaboration, for our reservation and for our people, that's good, we're in the right place. And creator, we always offer up that prayer. Don't ever forget the prayer, because that's what mother earth grows us for, grows us the good stuff.</p> <p>So, I'm glad everybody's on here, I'm very thankful for everybody. We get our heads together, and we make go a long ways. I learned a lot, from [the agents], and I always say, two heads, three heads, we can get her done, we just got to keep going and stay consistent.</p>
Indian Community Development Around Economic and Workforce Enhancement	Economic development	<p>We have a rarity of apple trees and pear, and we have raspberries and strawberries behind it with juneberries. And we have beehives there, we help people raise bees, and they take their honey and they sell it to the store. And it just goes round a circle like that. So, when we harvest our apples, right now as we speaking, that's where I had somebody up there, on a lawnmower, mowing the apple orchard. And we're second in state for our orchard, but we're going to be first this year though I said. We have people building benches where our apple orchard, we collaborated with [a fence company] and they come in and built us a bear fence. The community boys just put up a real nice gate, so when we harvest, we bring in the youth, we bring in everybody, and everybody's going to do something with making apple butter, to apple pie, to apple crisp, we show them how to cut the apples up and freeze them, so they can make apple pie whenever they're ready to.</p> <p>Because we have a lot of ceremonies and we kind of get that stuff for our community and our events.</p>

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Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for farmers	[The agent] brings in presenters for workshops that are put on in the wintertime, brings presenters in from the USDA as well as producers. For example, we had a producer come in and give us a very good class on [cash crop] production, that was a couple years ago. So, she's been beneficial, ...she has the knack to get producers to come together.
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for farmers	Well, the [cash crop] presentation, the presenter that she brought in on that, the Ag committee for... Development Group, we were studying the possibility of raising [cash crop] here... because of the land base that we have. And so that put us on the right track, as far as which direction that maybe we should be going, so there would be one thing, that instead of us going out and planting a bunch of [cash crop], way before we knew anything about it, that kind of prevented us from making a big financial error there.
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for ranchers	We also have an annual bull test that's done in April or May, a couple of requirements that are made and supported by the council, the bulls get a breeding soundness exam as well as a trichomoniasis test. So, [the agent] has helped me with that, she makes the advertisement for the bull test.
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for ranchers	And [the agent] got a livestock sale going here, just some of the things that goes on here. And the main thing with me is the Ag workshops that she brings in during the wintertime for ranchers and farmers to attend, those are good workshops. They're about financing, and different production methods. And those are all good presenters, so that comes in here, and they talk to tell producers about financing and how to get loans, and how to get grants.
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for ranchers	The programming that Extension puts together, specifically, the ranchers round up, that's a really a fun event in the winter. And just having that group, that network of producers, and knowing that Extension is there to help us, to advocate for services. If there's things that those people are having problems with, or issues, things like that, [the agent] will contact us and get clarification, so she can get additional information out to people. [The agents] know what people are going through, and just trying to survive and continue operating during the difficult times. And so, I would just say is, as a livestock producer [I] appreciate just the networking, and the networking that we have together as producers.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Adult involvement	I finally learned how to use a pressure cooker, thanks to [the agent]. I've always had a garden, but I was always afraid to use one, because I always heard the stories of them blowing up. But thanks to [the agent], I can now use

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		the pressure cooker, and I can my own meat and everything else now.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Community involvement	I think we've got like 63 or 65 new gardens that are being [established in the community]. That is an amazing amount, and it's because of [FRTEP], and the resources that they have. That's a lot of people that are putting in gardens this year.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Healthy food choices	For the most part, yeah, I raise a lot of my own food. So, I know what's going in my mouth, and my grandkids mouth, when they're eating, I know what they're eating, I know where it's coming from. And this is thanks to Extension the things that I do, and that I've learned a lot of it is through them.
Natural Resource Conservation and Bio-energy Development	Sustainability efforts	And [the agent would] show them how to transplant a tree, and that's another thing too we do is get trees and transplant them.
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Gardening and nutrition	I [have worked at ...Grade School for the past two years..., and last spring, right before Corona, myself and another co-worker had kind of tossed around the idea of a garden. It was really overwhelming because we don't have very good soil behind our school, it was all backfilled when the school was built. And we were starting from nothing, so it was really overwhelming and basically, Extension just took us by the hand and walked us through every single thing we had to do. [Extension is] super consistent, [the agent] would meet with us, tell us this is what needs to be done in the next couple days, or the next week, gave us a timeline. So, we had a nice little garden last year, and then over the course of this year with much more planning time, they helped us design and put up a high tunnel, which I built with my students. We grew seedlings in the classroom for the past couple months, once we got back into the classroom after Corona, and, basically, we made the decision as a school just to focus on reading and math this year. So growing our plants in the classroom, and starting to plant before they left school was our science curriculum really these past six months. [The garden] is all planted. Before the kids left school, we got most of our root stuff in. The kids and I planted [vegetables], and got a lot of that stuff in, and then we finished it up. The kids, and I built the high tunnel together, then I put the plastic on, and I put all of our seedlings in. So yeah, we're all planted now. Last year, the way [we gardened over the summer] we just kind of put it out there on Facebook when we'd be there, and kids would stop by. And over the course of it, there's been a couple of kids who have gotten really interested and

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		spent a lot of time in the garden really working on maintaining it. But even more than that, it's created like a gathering space for a lot of our students, especially last year when it was a weird summer, for our kids to come connect and be outside and be safe.
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Gardening and nutrition	...in the classroom [for] some kids that they were young[er] last year, we started the garden, and they kind of saw the progression of it last year, and then in the fall, we started out digging up [vegetables] together. And based on the grade level, we did different math activities with them. So, with my first graders, we were just looking at more and less, and counting and looking at size. And the bigger kids they were working on graphing and looking at the... plant production.
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Gardening and nutrition	Truly, I would have never felt like I was capable of [incorporating gardening into the curriculum], and, like I said, the planning with Extension and their ability to connect me with the resources I need, whether it's financial resources, or connecting me with people in the community, like, okay, who do you call when you have questions about [vegetables]? Who do you call when you want to go look at a high tunnel, they've connected me with other people in the community [who] are gardening. And just made it seem from my perspective, like it was doable, because I really felt overwhelmed. And even this year, with how overwhelming it was to teach online, and at some point, I was like, "Okay, I don't know if I can take on the garden this year," and my coworker left, so it was really just me going for it with my kids. And, yeah, without Extension, I would have just let it go, and we wouldn't have the gardening and our kids wouldn't have had these experiences and these memories. And yeah, so just the support, and the planning, and the resources and all of that.
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Gardening and nutrition	The community boys just put up a real nice gate, so when we harvest, we bring in the youth, we bring in everybody, and everybody's going to do something with making [food products from the Orchard], we show them how to cut the [fruit] up and freeze them, so they can make [fruit] pie whenever they're ready to. Because we have a lot of ceremonies and we kind of get that stuff for our community and our events.
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Life skills	[Extension inspired] gardening being [is] so relaxing, and you can go there and water, you can go there and pull weeds out, all that's good for all these people [who] are having mental issues. So, it all comes together because some kids need that, they need that relaxing. And to see

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		these kids, see that they can bring life here and feed our people. [For] those kids [with mental health issues] it's so good for them [to plant] a tree, they come back, and they check their tree.
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Social connections and community engagement	Our daughter... had the high selling pig last year, and she got \$7.50 a pound for it on the virtual sale, so she was pretty happy about that. Not just our kids, but all the kids in the area. I think it was good for them to see the rewards of their hard work, and then also getting to meet one another, stay in contact with one another. You know, all of our kids know each other now, and they all have a common goal to raise these animals.
Response to COVID	Adaptation of programs and services	And even this year, with how overwhelming it was to teach online, and at some point, I was like, "Okay, I don't know if I can take on the garden this year, and my coworker left, so it was really just me going for it with my kids. And, yeah, without Extension, I would have just let it go, and we wouldn't have the gardening and our kids wouldn't have had these experiences and these memories. And yeah, so just the support, and the planning, and the resources and all of that.
Response to COVID	Adaptation of programs and services	We started in October of 2019 for the new [4-H hog] project here. And then we got COVID, so [animal auction] went virtual last year. It wasn't the same, it was not the same, we still were able to get all the animals sold, made it through the project year, and then we're starting our third year this year.
Response to COVID	Adaptation of programs and services	And specifically, during COVID last year, [our Extension partner agency] administered billions of dollars nationwide and accepts these farm and ranch subsidies for producers. And because [the community] was locked down and we had such strict restrictions in place to protect people, but we also still needed to get these programs delivered. So, we did what we call USDA farms FSA drive up signups. So, we partnered with Extension there and these outreach events that we did, were the only events held in the United States.
Response to COVID	Adaptation of programs and services	Because outreach was basically prohibited, but we did it in coordination with the Tribe, which we have a responsibility to provide service on the reservation, and because of the restrictions, we just did it as a service like, this is our job. And that's just one of the examples of what Extension helped us do during the pandemic, to help ag producers...

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Response to COVID	Adaptation of programs and services	And so, we brought in new [community] customers that I had never worked with before in my 10 years that I've been working there. ...they were producers were coming out of the woodwork, we got really good attendance there, and then, of course, the word of mouth that Extension does and helping work one-on-one with producers, helps get people to the door for USDA.
Response to COVID	Adaptation of programs and services	...going to school in [the local community], [our son] was involved in FFA, so he showed his steer the following year through FFA at the 4-H sale, and stuff. So, the following year, he did good and everything, and even though we had a virtual sale this past year, it worked out great. I mean, with how crazy things were, to be able to have that virtual sale, it was great.
Response to COVID	Adaptation of programs and services	Our daughter... had the high selling pig last year, and she got \$7.50 a pound for it on the virtual sale, so she was pretty happy about that. Not just our kids, but all the kids in the area. I think it was good for them to see the rewards of their hard work, and then also getting to meet one another, stay in contact with one another. You know, all of our kids know each other now, and they all have a common goal to raise these animals.
Overall	Consistency	When you see the gardens or you see other things going on, it's because they get people involved, and they're very consistent with what they do. They have gotten a lot of people involved.
Overall	Consistency	They have good follow through. And people enjoy participating in what they have to offer.
Overall	Diversity and quantity of programs and services	They are all over the place all the time.
Overall	Quality of staff	They are totally dedicated to the things that they do here.

