

Eastern Band of Cherokee Nation Federally Recognized Tribe Extension Program Ripple Effects Mapping Findings

The Indian Land Tenure Foundation (ILTF) 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 Eastern Band of Cherokee 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 July 2021, a virtual Ripple Effects Mapping event was held with Eastern Band of Cherokee 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 Eastern Band of Cherokee 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 4-8 includes these themes and all of the stories collected from your REM event.
- Page 9 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 Eastern Band of Cherokee 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 4-8, 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

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

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

3. Tribal Youth and 4-H

- Artistic expression
- Family Engagement
- Life skills
- Social Connections & Community Engagement

Response to COVID

- Adaptation of Programs and Services

Overall

- Approachability
- Cultural Understanding and Respect
- Diversity and Quantity of Programs and Services

Themes, Subthemes and Stories

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
Indian Farmer and Rancher Productivity and Management	Support for farmers	...as a farmer some of the services that are provided such as a soil samples. If I can come here and get my soil samples I'd be happy to go out to surrounding county to seek that and I don't want to have to go somewhere else.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Adult involvement	Well, you couldn't [garden] without Extension, because they are the ones that organize all the events. I'm sure that they got the feedback about the [traditional vegetable]. So, you can't just go buy [traditional vegetable] in bulk. So, [Extension is the] connection between the farmers and gardeners, and they're the connection between the [tribal] population and all the events that go on, from the programs, from 4-H, to the seed giveaway, to plants, to giving you information on anything that you may want to start as a farming venture.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Community involvement	So, we share [our family's produce] with the community. My daytime job is I'm the tribal commodity foods manager, and so we got a CARES act grant to renovate a building, and in that building, on the roof is going to be a garden, and I have to say, the garden was inspired by this Cooperative Extension doing the garden.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Education	Some of the other programs that the extension had started that he was real appreciative was the ramp project and so he has lots of little patches of ramps around and then they had a mushroom project, where they did log inoculation we did those and now those logs that we had done in the past are all their life is over, so we're going to try to do about 10 different varieties of mushrooms so it's um it's a new venture for the farm and the extension is helped us with so many programs from helping us with spring development for water for the animals to giving us advice and we're going to be putting in a irrigation system and a high tunnel, so we really appreciate all their expertise and all the help that we've been getting and I don't know where I would be without them.

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Education	One thing is I mentioned earlier, was we all have one grocery store on tribal land and it's not exactly ever the best that's not exactly stocked we're happy to have it, but now with COVID-19 when resources are kind of running low and we didn't have food, you know the secret giveaways and that gives people the ability to have a garden a yard. Definitely helps because we have some outlying communities that it's not exactly easy for people who are homebound to access and get out to get fresh food and so being able to have more food in the communities are really important component. And was that's what I'm a farmer for, but in my role in tribe, where we do a lot of plant growing and giveaways as well we're not educators, we don't do educational outreach and so having these FRTEP agents who can introduce the educational component that's needed so once they come and get tomatoes from us we're not going out to the field to assist the growers once they receive them, so we have for tap here to answer those questions from the growers to make sure they're successful.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Exercise	We [harvest in the woods with advice from FRTEP] because it is a sacred place, and that's the history, to keep the kids going and people love to come and walk.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Healthy food choices	So it's growing very well. The seed program, we got seeds and we did our garden. It allowed our family to get ahead and be more conscious of health. Because when you grow and you see, it gives you a greater appreciation.
Indigenous Food Systems for Food Security, Food Safety and Obesity Reduction	Traditional foods	So my family believes the cooperative extension is like the core of Cherokee, all the goodness. So we have participated in the shiitake mushrooms, and brought it home, and our family, we went and bought and inoculator, and we cut some more trees, because the mountains here, you want to walk and be... My grandfather used to go into the woods and used to be able to get the mushrooms, and he has since passed, and so I don't have him to walk the woods for him to show me which mushrooms to pick. So you just don't want to walk into the woods and eat any mushroom that's out there, so when the cooperative extension was showing us how to drill and inoculate and do our own mushrooms, we signed up, and that was great.

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Artistic expression	[Our 4-H club] did pottery... We got a little bit of... a break... from lockdown that we could actually have the kids come in, we just... wanted to do some[thing] fun with them, so... we did pottery [and the agent] actually bought us paddles so that they could... stamp the pottery that they did. ...we do it with them and then you know it gives them the knowledge to go and teach it to someone else. We've done storytelling to where they tell the Cherokee's legends and stories and then the people [who] are listening will paint a picture and we had to make masks. ...I told stories and then they got to make a mask of... the story that they liked best. ...with 4-H [we will go to] conferences and whatnot. [Going to conferences] gives me ideas of... what we can do with the kids.
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Family engagement	I started out with because I think that that's when everything really started from my family with the Extension office and for each was their seed packet giveaway it happens every year everybody looks forward to it. All things COVID going on, so it was a nice distraction for the family I've got three boys and my husband, but it was a nice distraction for all of us. We started a garden at home, so we had food, and then they started getting involved with [the agent] and the junior master gardener program that was offered so, then they even got more of like an intro to gardening help plants work. And they had, like other activities to complete but they really, enjoyed it. So much so that, with the seeds that we were given by the extension office all the extra seedlings that we couldn't plant in our area they took to the Jackson County Farmers Market and gave them away. That was their community service project through junior master gardeners and the 4-H Sally helped out a lot and you know they got that good feeling of like "hey I did this." They were so proud, you know, because it was something that they had gotten from a seed I'm taking care of and really cared for and then you know we're giving it away.

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Life skills	Here at the high school, we have been remote learning. This whole year and a good portion of last year too, and so we're finally being able to get students back in the building and we wanted to do some financial literacy with our students... [The agent] and I had talked and she's like "yeah I've got some financial curriculum we could use" and she's been helping us plan. We're using the real-world real money curriculum by Extension, but for our planning purposes it's just the real life Expo as we're talking about financial literacy college and job opportunities here in the Community. It's something that's desperately needed in the Community that financial educational piece, but then to also partner with [the agent] is just amazing because she's helped organize, she's bought the curriculum for us to use so it's just so amazing.
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Life skills	I wanted to teach cultural culture, history language to our kids and do it in the for a way because it just works and [the agent], of course, said, we can do this and. You know, we started on that journey of figuring out, you know will, how do we teach the kids this and keep it in the framework of 4-H and it just worked, and I have seen our kids grow like leaps and bounds. And you know they've learned things they have gone to where they can't they couldn't speak in front of a group of people, because if you don't know these people not talking to them. And to where they actually you know they taught before lockdown they taught a roomful of college freshman about Cherokee culture. And they did it all themselves me and Sally you know just step back and they did it. Wow and you know, without for age of the extension Office like I you know it's something it's something our community needs it's something that you know I really want for our kids so they can grow and learn and you know just continue to become the people they're going to be.
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Life skills	[The agent] had put together so many activities and giveaways and pickups they did a cooking class which I mean again it's those real-world skills that you mean I teach but it's nice to have some support.

Theme	Sub-Theme	Statement
Tribal Youth and 4-H	Social Connections & Community Engagement	Yeah, we [have 4-H kids that come to the farm, like] a youth council would come out, and we'd have an acre set out just for them to grow in. And we'd start in the spring with them, and they'd go all the way through to the fall festival and would do the parade, would do the floats for them and everything else. Or they would do the floats, we would help them deal with it, and they done all real good on that. But they come to Cherokee and they got a place up here now, so they pretty well. It's a good program.
Response to COVID	Adaptation of programs and services	[Partnering] with [the agent] is just amazing because she's helped organize, she's bought the curriculum for us to use so it's just so amazing and then also from the other educator perspective, her name is known through the high school, middle school, and elementary school. She comes into the classrooms teachers are so happy when she comes, and she's done several of the chick incarnations and even. With all things COVID they even posted some of the chicks hatching online so [the students could] still see it.
Response to COVID	Adaptation of programs and services	I mean, [COVID] just set everything back, and getting in and out. But they're reachable on the phone any time you want them.
Overall	Approachability	And if anybody needed anything that nobody could help them with, they'd come to cooperative extension.
Overall	Cultural Understanding and Respect	One part of that and it be a big complete, and so I think just for so many levels that these programs are FRTEP that are offered are important to the community. Like I'm looking around and I live in the head of big cove and it takes me 40 minutes to get out of town I'm looking across the room and I've got somebody he's an hour and a half from me so we're small but we're so spread out. Where you may because there's 100 counties in North Carolina and we're 101st and if we didn't have a FRTEP agent being able to go out and assist all these outlying areas... I think that's the really important part, because we are spread all over the traditional homelands. I mean they're definitely some things that may have been kind of lost to an extent, but I've been revitalized by these programs that are popular in the community.
Overall	Diversity and quantity of programs and services	I feel like I'm forgetting some other stuff, because there's just been so much that they do in the community here.

Image of Ripple Effects Map

