

Native American Nutrition Conference: September 18-20, 2017
Handout Material for Breakout Session Participants

Session: Why and how to document the traditional food system in your community

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Session Assistants:

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Abstract of Session

Understanding the local food known and available in a community of Indigenous People is an important first step to building effective community nutrition programs that will promote better health. In this workshop, we intend to explore the many ways that this knowledge can be recorded and transmitted within communities to: school children, youth, women's groups, libraries, adult education programs, etc. The basic process begins with creating a group of 8 – 10 knowledgeable people (ie. elders, agriculturalists, nutritionists) to record a list of the local cultural plant and animal foods, by species, with their common names. This list is then expanded to include the scientific names, local knowledge about seasonal availability, the parts of the food used, preparation and preservation methods, and general frequency of use during the main season. Other information of interest can also be taken- such as cultural stories about the food, the special attributes of the food, taste preferences, the environmental constraints, nutritional data, and recipes of key dishes prepared with them. The project can be expanded in several possible ways: for example, with photographs, or with publications for use by different age groups and purposes. Examples from communities of Indigenous Peoples will be shared during the workshop. If you have a traditional food document from your community, bring it along for discussion.

Process:

After an introduction to the topic, each table will have about 1 hour to discuss two topics:

- 1) Why** to document a community's local food system (about 20 min).
- 2) How** to explore and record important information in a community's food system using steps noted in the abstract and introduction (about 40 min).

Each table will identify a recorder who will make important points on the flip-charts provided. The flip chart sheets will be collected and form the basis for a summary report on the session to be sent to participants.

Harriet, Valerie and Letitia will circulate among the tables to assist discussion.

Examples of community traditional food documentation. Four examples will be shared, and can be expanded with other examples provided by participants. These are:

1. *Nuxalk Food and Nutrition Handbook*. For further information contact: Peter Tallio, Nuxalk Nation Wellness Program. Email: Wellness@NuxalkNation.ca
2. *Healthy Hopi Recipes and Native Edible Plants*. Contact: Valerie Nuvayestewa, Hopi Special Diabetes Program. Email: Vnuvayestewa@hopi.nsn.us
3. *NEST'AN Harvest Lunar Calendar*. Contact: Seth Pilsk or Twila Cassadore, The Traditional Western Apache Diet Project. Email: sethpilsk@gmail.com or tr_cassadore@yahoo.com
4. 13 Moons. *The 13 Lunar Phases, and How They Guide the Swinomish People*, and the *13 Moons 2017 Lunar Calendar*. Contact: Jamie Donatuto, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community. Email: jdonatuto@swinomish.nsn.us

Additional contacts: Harriet's email: harriet.kuhnlein@mcgill.ca Letitia's email: letitiamccune@gmail.com

References:

- 1) Kuhnlein HV, B Erasmus and D Spigelski. (2009) Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems: The Many Dimensions of Culture, Diversity and Environment for Nutrition and Health. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome. 339 pp.
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0370e/i0370e00.htm>
- 2) Kuhnlein HV, S Smitasiri, S Yesudas, L Bhattacharjee, L Dan and S Ahmed (2006). Documenting Traditional Food Systems of Indigenous Peoples: International Case Studies. Guidelines for Procedures. CINE Website: <https://www.mcgill.ca/cine/resources/data>