Choctaw Stewardship News

In Cooperation and Understanding With

MBCI Department of Natural Resources

Growing The Future!

Choctaw Stewardship is taking care of the Earth . From Nanih Waiya to Chucalissa and beyond , practice good stewardship!

E-Newsletter Becomes Reality . ***Why a email newsletter ? Well, we thought it would be a good way to get the word out to folks interested in conservation and education on Tribal lands and it may save a tree or two. Oh well , If you like it, tell us about it at*** **choctawstewardshipnews@gmail.com**

Kids playing with lamb down on the farm

photo by Jim McAdory

Wetland Discovery Classroom in Conehatta Opens Soon !

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April –June 2012

Upcoming Events

Annual Choctaw Farmers Market growers meeting - March 28th at The Natural Resources complex on Black Jack Rd. starting at 10am.

SDPI aftercore meeting Home Canning each Monday in June.

-Neshoba County Lunch and Learn garden programs every third Thursday at the Neshoba coliseum at noon.

-Wetland Discovery Outdoor Classroom April 9-13

-SDPI after core meeting each Monday in April at noon, topic: Sweet potato vs. White potato

-Wildlife Dept. training topic: Fisheries Management- April 18th and May 31st

-AG-CEL field trips for CCHS junior class May 8th and 9th at MSU

Home canning workshop June 18th at 6:00 pm at the MBCI Department of Natural Resources ***Blackjack Road***

Mississippi Choctaw Youth Go Ag –CEL

In national studies concerning youth in America today, there has been a sharp decline in awareness of agriculture and natural resources. This trend has especially been detrimental in the knowledge of where our food originates and the hard work it takes to set the American dinner table. With this trend, young people in America also lose the knowledge of how important our natural resources are to our daily lives.

In many cases when young people are asked where their food comes from, the response is usually the grocery store. And when ask about general paper products the response is usually in the same realm, Wal-Mart, K-Mart or just the department store in town. This trend is not just elsewhere, it is affecting youth in Mississippi as well.

The Mississippi Choctaw being aware of this trend has understood for more years than is recorded in American history books, that an understanding and appreciation for nature is a Native American tradition that must not merely dwindle away in our fast pace world of today. The purveyors of American agriculture and natural resources have done such an effective job providing these life essentials, that the average citizen of the U.S. and Mississippi has not had the concern of producing food for the table or materials for housing. It's easy to understand how a disconnect between agriculture and nature can happen when parents are busy making a living elsewhere in the business world.

The Mississippi Choctaw has been taking a proactive approach to this trend and has worked with the Mississippi State University Extension Service and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service to assist with reintroducing tribal youth to this tradition of understanding the natural world and agriculture. Such tribal departments as the Youth Opportunity Program, Tribal 4H, Boys and Girls Clubs and the Choctaw Central High School have been working to enlighten youth to these overlooked aspects of modern life.

The approach the tribe has chosen to take is making sure the tribal youth get a chance to actually see where their food, fiber, and natural resources originate and how it gets to the consumer. Each of these tribal interties has made available the resources for their youth to participate in field trips to such places as the Noxubee Refuge, sweet potato, dairy, sheep, row crop farms and equine facilities. The Tribal High School has even authorized a program unique to the Mississippi Choctaw called AG-CEL, which stands for Agriculture for Choctaw Empowerment and Life. The Ag-CEL program is designed to introduce tribal high school juniors to agriculture and natural resource related careers which will give tribal youth alternative options of careers they may want to pursue. (Continued on page 4)

Stewardship Definitions

Hybrid:: The offspring of two animals or plants of different breeds, varieties or species, especially as produced through human manipulation for specific genetic characteristics.

Rhizome: Horizontal underground plant stem (**Swamp Cane**)Capable of producing the shoot root stems of a new plant.

Stolon : Stem which grow at the soils surface or just below ground that form roots at the node, and new plant from the buds.

Seasonal High Tunnel

Submitted by : Tim Oakes

Recently Tribal Members from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians toured a Seasonal High Tunnel located at The Mississippi State University Research Facility at the South Farm. As part of a Green Re-Entry Program Grant , "The Advisers and Councilors from the Youth Court Services wanted to explored the potential use of the tunnel at the Osapausi Amasalichi or Healing Garden located in the Pearl River community and were impressed with it's potential" . said Jim McAdory , MSU Tribal Extension Agent.

Seasonal high tunnels are structures made of plastic or metal pipe and covered with plastic or other sheeting. Easy to build, maintain, and move, they provide an energy-efficient way to extend the growing season, reduce or avoid use of pesticides and reduce run off and leaching of nitrogen. Unlike greenhouses, they require no energy, relying on natural sunlight to modify the climate inside to create favorable conditions for growing vegetable and other specialty crops.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is also providing some financial assistance for seasonal high tunnels as part of a three-year trial to determine their effectiveness in conserving water, reducing pesticide use, maintaining vital soil nutrients, and increasing crop yields.

Stewardship Learning

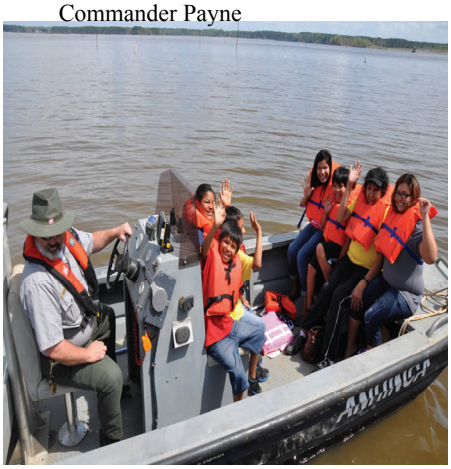
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Native American Heritage Month Posters given away to Tribal schools each November .

MBCI Students learn the facts from Tim Oakes using an enviroscape model on how to be good stewards of the land. (Mrs. Pancrantz 7th grade class) photo by Jim McAdory

Wes Neal MSU Biologist with YOP

YOP at MSU

Commander Payne



4-Hers learn Water Safety at Corp of Engineers Lake Okatibbee with Corp Officer, Scott Payne .

4-Hers introduced to reptiles by Mitiz Reed

4-H,ers and 4 leaf clovers

Continued from page 1

My job as an Extension agent is to facilitate and implement the tribes wishes for its' educational endeavors. On a personal note I've been very impressed with how this tribe is addressing this issue of keeping the tradition of agriculture and natural resources awareness. I learned in a recent class I had taken that when Hernando Desoto explored Mississippi; he discovered many acres cultivated and in agriculture production. He also wrote in his journal he could ride his horse in a full gallop through the forest and not hit a hanging branch or slowed due to undergrowth. What he found was expertly managed forest and crops worked with masterful hands that supplied all the needs of the indigenous people, which are the ancestors of you the reader of this article. Looks as though the tribe is teaching a new generation how to appreciate, manage and prosper in the ever changing world. As for me, I thank the tribe for allowing the Mississippi State University Extension Service to play a role in the education of the tribal youth.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Mississippi Choctaw Field Office and MSU Tribal Extension Office

Phone 601-656-9679 or 601-656-2070

Helping People Help the Land!

This news letter is provided by the office of the Tribal Extension Agent, Jim McAdory, Mississippi State University Extension Service through the Federal Recognized Tribal Extension Program .

And by : The office of Tim Oakes, Tribal Liaison , Mississippi Choctaw Field Office , USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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