

KAWENNÍ:IOS

Kakwitè:ne | Spring 2026



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Council Greetings

Tekwanonhwerá:tons Akwesasne,

After a long, cold winter, the arrival of spring brings a sense of renewal and new beginnings. It is a time to reflect on the past while embracing fresh ideas and opportunities ahead. As a community, we continue turning the page toward growth, progress, and possibility.

In January, the Akwesasne Housing Authority's Kahwa:tsire Project welcomed its first families home. Selected through a lottery system, five families eagerly moved into safe, energy-efficient, high-quality homes they can now proudly call their own. This long-awaited milestone marks an important step forward, and the project will continue to expand, creating more housing opportunities for our community members.

As families grow and raise their children, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe remains committed to strengthening our Early Learning Center (ELC). The Education Committee was re-established, with the mission to function as a structured body to liaise with educational institutions, advocate for community priorities, and promote transparent and consistent communication between academic institutions, the Tribe and community. These efforts reflect positive movement toward a stronger future for our children.

The ELC has seen significant progress in recent months. Policies have been carefully reviewed and updated, foundational documents implemented, and leadership, staff, and systems prepared for reopening. The strawberry classroom reopened in January, followed by the lavender room shortly after, with training continuing to ensure readiness and excellence. We are proud to once again provide a nurturing environment grounded in the teachings that will guide the next generation of our community. Nia:wen to everyone who contributed to making this possible.

Across the Tribe, many projects are underway as we continue working to enhance the health, safety, and education of our people. Several capital improvements were completed, all with an eye toward building a strong and sustainable future. Recently, Sub-Chief King and I attended the Central New York American Public Works Association Awards Ceremony. The Tribe was honored to receive the 2026 "Structures of the Year" award for the la'teiewenhnani'haras Amphitheater. It was a proud moment to accept this recognition on behalf of the Tribe. Our gratitude goes to Beardsley Architects + Engineers and to Colleen Thomas, Planning and Infrastructure Director and her team for their dedication and hard work.

As we continue building for the future, we remain rooted in our traditions. Spring reminds us of the Seed Songs sung to awaken the earth, the beauty of our culture expressed through art, and the traditional medicines lovingly passed down by our Elders. We are called on to conserve our waters, protect our resources, and carry forward the knowledge that we have been entrusted with. There is always more to learn, understand, and advocacy to be done.

As you plant, and harvest this Spring season, whether you are singing or humming, remember the importance of reciprocity. Offer gratitude. Awaken the seeds from their winter rest, and nurture them for the year ahead. Events throughout the year such as the Art Market and Juried Art Show provide meaningful opportunities for visitors to experience and learn about our people, culture, and artistic traditions.

In closing, I wish each of you good health and well-being. May we have a good mind in the present and carry it into the future, always striving to see the good in one another.

**Niawen'kó:wa,
 Sub-Chief Agnes "Sweets" Jacobs**



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U.S. Army Public Service Commendation Medal

**Katelynn Delormier A/ Director, CMC
Kahentase Terrance A/ Communications Specialist**

At the March Tribal Monthly Meeting, U.S. military veterans, Erin Cook and Cheryl Jacobs received the Public Service Commendation Medal for their exemplary service, staunch advocacy, and tireless compassion and care on behalf of the Secretary of the Army, presented by Richard Barbato, U.S. Army Veteran.



Barbato described them as “two dynamite Army vets,” praising the reports and language they crafted while serving on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee, enacting change at higher levels of government. “They are literally saving lives, not just of Native veterans, regardless of their location, but all veterans.”

Jacobs is a veteran of both the U.S. Army and Marine Corps. During her time as Tribal Sub-Chief from 2015 to 2018, she was integral to the creation of the Akwesasne Mohawk Veterans Monument at Generations Park. Additionally, Cheryl coordinated a veterans one-day conference held at Akwesasne Housing Authority Training Center, where more than 100 veterans from local and surrounding areas attended, which Barbato called “the best veterans’ event I’ve ever attended,” having attended memorials from coast to coast. Cheryl is vocal about Native American veterans being ignored in federal spaces. “In these meetings, they don’t like to speak about Natives,” she said. “I’m very vocal about that. I’m fighting for funding for Native veterans because our veterans are forgotten when they return home.” Cheryl continues to serve on the U.S. Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee and successfully led the “Pave our Post” project, replacing the Post #1479 Legion parking lot.

Cook, who served on the Veterans Affairs Readjustment and Counseling Committee between 2019 and 2022, remarked on being recognized for her time there as “truly an honor.” Her experience through motherhood, loss, and supporting others



forged a stronger connection to her committee work. “Whether we’re in classrooms, combat zones, clinics, or communities, this work is about helping people and how we show up for one another.” She toured veterans’ centers throughout the country, hearing their stories of trauma and survival, to be able to identify deficiencies in services, translating into the adoption of new policy. She shared, “Compassion and accountability can exist together. None of us get this right all the time. Growth is something we return to again and again,” demonstrating the emotional weight carried by those who serve others.

Of the award presentation, Tribal Council stated, “We are proud to recognize both Cheryl and Erin, surrounded by their families and friends, for their service in the Army and Marine Corps and as U.S. Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee members. Their advocacy, courage, and service to their community have earned them both this distinguished honor.”

Niawen’kó:wa to both Erin and Cheryl for their service in the U.S. armed forces and the U.S. Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee, where their work will positively impact veterans for years to come.

Good Mind Grappling Program Update

Katelynn Delormier A/ Director, CMC, Kahentase Terrance A/ Communications Specialist

At the March Tribal Monthly Meeting, the nonprofit youth organization Good Mind Grappling (“GMG”) provided a programmatic update on its activities to the community as a Tribal Opioid Settlement Fund awardee.

The Tribal Opioid Settlement Fund was created following a 2018 filing in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York to address the devastating effects of prescription opioids created by pharmaceutical companies. Since 2023, the Tribe received varying annual distributions totaling just over \$1.8 million and will continue to receive varying amounts until 2037. It is estimated that the Tribe may receive over \$3.3 million by the end of 2037.

Founded in 2023, brothers Thomas Rahontsiiosta Barreiro and Phillip Rawerriio Barreiro, multi-time Canadian Greco-Roman Wrestling National champions, bring their combined decades of technical experience and knowledge to bring a program for at-risk youth to the Akwesasne community. “Our mission is to combat intergenerational trauma in Indigenous communities by providing positive physical outlets for at-risk and wounded youth,” Thomas shared. Students learn to move with intention, regulate emotions, resolve conflict peacefully, and uplift one another.

“We cannot change the history that brought trauma into our community. But we can influence the environments our children grow up in today. The work we do today can impact the outcomes for youth in our community tomorrow,” Good Mind Grappling shared at the March Tribal Monthly Meeting.

In 2025, the SRMT Opioid Settlement Fund awarded Good Mind Grappling \$57,500. This award fund helped expand youth wrestling in Akwesasne and strengthened

partnerships with local schools, and the Akwesasne Boys & Girls Club. This funding supported program structure, curriculum development, coaching, mentorship, and long-term capacity building. GMG Coaching staff includes community members, Phillip White, and Shoenkwarowane Sargent, as well as Sariah Stewart, a six-time freestyle All-American and a two-time folkstyle All-American wrestler.

During the 2025 program year, GMG held 19 sessions across both Salmon River and St. Regis Mohawk School in partnership with Akwesasne Boys and Girls Club (ABGC). Of the 47 registered youth, nearly half (49%) were girls, demonstrating a strong and growing balance in participation and interest. GMG hosted its program at not only the ABGC Summer Program and Salmon River Central Schools, but also introductory sessions at Akwesasne Mohawk Board of Education Schools in Kana:takon, Tsi Snaihne, and Kawehno:ke.

“It’s been really nice to see a community program that supports wellness and provides an alternative sport to the youth and people of Akwesasne. It’s been offered to all ages. And it’s there for all the right reasons. Our children have the opportunity to learn from our own athletes in Akwesasne territory. It really is a gift, for our people to share their gift to inspire other young members,” a parent shared of the Good Mind Grappling programming.

In 2025, the Tribal Council published a request for FY 2026 proposals for non-profit organizations to provide culturally appropriate activities that are aimed at remediating the opioid epidemic’s impact on the Akwesasne community. The Tribal Council looks forward to the announcing the 2026 Tribal Opioid Settlement Recipients on the Tribe’s social media and website: www.srmt-nsn.gov.

Education Spotlight: Michael Smoke

A/ Director, CMC
Katelynn Delormier

Born in Batavia, NY, Michael Smoke an aspiring health professional, spent his early years surrounded by love and encouragement provided by his mother and tota. Summers with his father in Tonawanda, NY, home to the Tonawanda band of Senecas, gave him exposure to diverse communities and shaped his views on his support team, the irreplaceable bond that molds and supports us through life. He shares, “In my teenage years is when I realized how important family is.”

After moving back to Akwesasne, he attended Salmon River Central School where he explored his interest in law by participating in the one-year New Visions: Law & Government Program offered through Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES. This program offers students the ability to explore rewarding career pathways while still staying on track to graduate with a Regents Diploma. Curious to see what life as a medical professional looked like, he joined the Akwesasne Research Center for Health (ARCH) Program offered to Mohawk high school students. The ARCH Program is administered by the Tribe’s Health Services and Education Divisions and the Roswell Park Cancer Institute’s Department of Indigenous Cancer Health. Here he explored the public health and research field, later presenting his findings on Polychlorinated Bisphenols (PCBs), and the effects on maternal health.

After graduating high school, Smoke applied to the University at Buffalo and completed



one year before transferring into Syracuse University’s Public Health Program, where he is actively involved with the Indigenous Students at Syracuse (ISAS), a student-led group that hosts activities, regular meetings, and offers a home-away-from-home during the semester.

Attending higher education off-territory can be challenging for Indigenous students, learning to navigate life away from the community. When asked how the Tribe has impacted his academic experience, he shares, “The Tribe has been a big supporter of my education. They’ve helped with stipends, scholarships. It has helped ease the financial burden and allowed me to focus on the education aspect.” Continuing his work with ARCH he was onboarded as the ARCH Resident Assistant, where he helped guide the newest cohort of high school students attending the program.

His advice to aspiring medical students, and students in general:

“Be open, jumping into things can open doors for you. When I did the Youth Ambassadors Program with ARCH, I thought I wanted to explore something in engineering. Building networks with other communities helped develop how I view my community, opened doors and gave me more opportunities.”

As for the future, Michael plans to keep his options open. “I’m not set on where to go right away.” What he is certain of, is using his professional and personal discoveries to positively affect the health and well-being of Akwesasne. “I want to work within the community. I want to work with communities elsewhere and bring knowledge back here.”

Smoke is one of many Akwesasne students pursuing his dreams and inspiring others to do the same. The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, in an effort to promote and encourage our students, proudly shares stories like Michael’s to show how a path to higher education is attainable and rewarding.

Allergies? Herbs to the Rescue!

**Centuri Cook
Administrative Assistant, CMC and Herbalist**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one in four people in the U.S. are affected by some type of allergen throughout the year. An allergen may be anything our immune system is hypersensitive to, causing a histamine reaction. Histamine is a chemical that is released when we encounter a “pathogen or foreign substance.” Even if it’s something we didn’t react to in the past, our immune system has already created those antibodies and will respond accordingly.

Most people tend to think that the cause of springtime allergens is from the average assortment of tree and grass pollens, but there are far more causes that wreak havoc on the allergy sufferer. Indoor allergens are even bigger culprits; these include: mold spores, pet dander, dust mites, cleaning supplies, laundry soap, dish soap, candles, and fragrances. Most people don’t address allergies until they’ve progressively gotten worse. By this time, they could be controlling your life, with symptoms like sneezing, post-nasal drip, coughing, eczema, and swelling to name a few.

What I’ve learned on my herbalist journey is that there are ways to manage allergies with herbs instead of over-the-counter medications. Antihistamines are growing right outside our homes and around our neighborhoods—accessible to us at any time. We just need to know what to use and how to use it.

Stinging Nettle, or *urtica dioica*, has a history of being considered a superfood due to its high vitamin and mineral content; the leaf alone contains approximately 25 percent protein. Among nettle’s nutritive benefits, it is also very nourishing to the kidneys. Because it’s so high in minerals, when used as a diuretic, nettle will replace minerals lost when the kidneys are flushing. Its antihistaminic actions work by stabilizing mast cells and preventing histamine release into the bloodstream. “Mast cells are your body’s alarm system. They look out for harmful invaders, like parasites. When they recognize something harmful, they send out signals that open your blood vessels, fill your tissues with fluid, and contract muscles in your GI tract and airways. Sometimes, they activate when they shouldn’t, causing allergic reactions,” according to the Cleveland Clinic.

Because of nettle’s strong kidney-supporting properties, it helps the kidneys eliminate inflammatory triggers, offering extra support for allergic symptoms. Taking just 300 milligrams of dried nettle orally multiple times a day can effectively reduce allergy symptoms. Nettle’s nutritional benefits are best extracted when steeped for six to eight hours. Not only would you gain the antihistaminic effects, but your body would also benefit from its superfood properties, gaining essential nutrients, strengthening the kidneys, and aiding in the elimination of allergy symptoms.

Goldenrod, is another powerful allergen-fighting herb. The literal translation of its Latin name, *solidago* means “to make whole,” which couldn’t be more fitting.

Goldenrod is best known for its anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties. Goldenrod is an astringent, meaning it helps tonify the mucous membranes, making it an excellent decongestant. It is especially helpful for drying up upper respiratory (sinus) congestion. Goldenrod is often blamed as a seasonal “allergen” because it blooms at the same time as ragweed.

Eyebright, or *euphrasia officinalis*, has long been used for its anti-catarhal (anti-mucus), antihistaminic, and anti-inflammatory effects. Traditionally, eyebright has been used to treat conjunctivitis, weepy, itchy, red eyes, and sinus congestion. These properties make it ideal for overall eye and upper respiratory health.

Herbalist Harvey Wickes Felter, eclectic medicine doctor and author of *Eclectic Materia Medica*, reported eyebright is “an admirable remedy for acute catarrhal inflammations of the nasal and ocular membranes, with profuse, watery secretion or abundant flow of acrid mucus, and attended with heat, pain, burning, and sneezing.” His findings further solidified eyebright as an effective remedy against allergens. In addition, eyebright is thought to improve weak vision. Anti-inflammatory and antioxidant actions of eyebright could contribute to this reputation; nonetheless, eyebright earns it. Over the years, herbs have proven their worth in countless ways. To claim they display a single action would not only be an understatement, but also presumptuous.

However, since goldenrod has heavy, sticky pollen, it doesn’t become airborne and relies on insects for pollination. This beautiful golden flower and leaf pair perfectly with nettles in an allergy tea or tincture for those suffering from allergies, sinusitis, the flu, or the common cold.

For thousands of years, our ancestors have used herbs as their primary means of healing. Since then, medicine has changed dramatically, but it remains our ultimate source. Herbs should not be feared but revered as the Creator’s love for us.

The herbs and plants around us have always been a gift; they are as healing within as they are beautiful around.

“I want to remind you that the reason that herbs can never be patented and owned by any individual or corporation is because they are, and always will be, the People’s medicine. They belong to all of us and it is my great hope in sharing this work that you will learn how to use them wisely for yourself, and the people you care for. Be safe, but do not be afraid.”
– Richard Whelan, Medical Herbalist





**Mose Herne,
A/Assistant Executive Director**

What drives people to jump in with both feet and start a business on a shoestring budget? For Kristy Oakes, owner and operator of the Sweetgrass Café, it was a combination of self-reflection brought on by a health scare, the personal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a life-long love of cooking and bringing people together. “My mom is a great cook and a bad*ss mom,” Kristy reflects, smiling.

Kristy was 16 weeks pregnant with her third child and experienced a heart episode. This was scary for her and her family and caused her to reflect on her life and ask the question, “What if tomorrow was the day? Would I be okay with what I’ve done with my life?” Since she was a child, Kristy dreamed of bringing people together through cooking healthy, sustainable, and delicious food.

Not long afterwards, the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, which impacted many families in profound ways. For Kristy, her employment ended when her long-term position was abolished. “What am I going to do now?” In hindsight, her decision couldn’t be more obvious.



Kristy started small—doing meal preps and selling out of her home. “During that time, I built my customer base and we started renovating the downstairs for the café.” She changed the design numerous times and smiles when she credits her husband for his patience while getting things just the way she wanted.

The café opened in May 2023 serving only pre-orders for about six months, then opening a couple days a week for lunch salads. “You couldn’t get healthy food or a good salad, and not just on the rez, but in the area. And I’m part of a growing number of women-owned businesses who are taking the bull by the horns. They’re doing great right now, and I’m here for it.”

Sustainability and locally-sourced ingredients are at the core of Kristy’s business model. Kristy explains, “We live in a wasteful world, eco-friendly was key, sustainability was key. The eggs in your salads are Mother Earth, we buy everything we can locally—South Glengarry in Canada, Potsdam Farmer’s Market, Canton Farmer’s Market and Wednesdays and Saturdays here in Akwesasne. The walnuts we serve comes from a local woman-owned business, the beef we use comes from Red Oak, a local farm, as well as the honey and maple syrup we use. There are no refined sugars in anything we make.” Eliminating waste—plastic containers, plastic bags, and other non-biodegradable products—was mandatory.

“I would rather dish out 50 ‘great’ salads instead of 100 ‘okay’ salads. For me, it’s quality over quantity. You eat with your eyes, and everything is displayed in our salads so you see what you’re getting. Everything is weighed and we strive for consistency. That’s one of the biggest compliments from customers,” Kristy says, “when they tell me they like our salads because they’re the same every time.”



The Sweetgrass Loft

If a thriving café isn't enough, Kristy and her husband decided to renovate a large apartment over her café and turn it into an Airbnb. The unit was vacated by a long-term tenant so the couple decided to completely renovate the space. "We did it all ourselves and took it right down to the studs and rafters." They left the rafters exposed and decorated to create a modern farmhouse feel. They also took down walls around two of the bedrooms to reduce it to a three-bedroom space with plenty of room for an airy kitchen, large dining area, and expansive living room. The rooms are tastefully decorated with art and photography pieces from friends and family vacations. "I want people to feel like they're home."



Kristy continues, "Start small and keep going. We 'built up.' It was like a volume. I'm just turning up the volume." Kristy is planning on opening five days per week and adding coffee and tea, breakfast sandwiches to expand their delicious options.

"I can't thank our customers enough. Without them, we're nothing. Our customers really appreciate the food and we get to know them on a personal level. I am happy I took a chance on life created something that I think was worth it... and my kids can be proud. That's where I land. I don't know where things go from here, but I think the volume is just going to go up."

Follow Sweetgrass Café on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date on the latest news or stop in at 100 Roosevelt Rd, Hogansburg, NY.



"Not a day goes by that I'm not appreciative of my customers and for all the support I receive from my family and friends. I don't know where I'd be without my husband. He's so great. He puts up with my changing my mind 20 times a day, and he executes. Good teamwork. We wouldn't be as successful as we are without his patience." Kristy has also worked closely with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Office of Economic Development (OED), which provides support to local Akwesasne businesses. "Kristy has been an awesome partner within our Akwesasne tourism network," notes OED Marketing Specialist Randi Barreiro. "Her genuineness and wonderful hospitality is exactly what visitors want to experience when they visit Akwesasne, and they come back because they feel they've made a friend."

When asked what advice she would give other women considering a business venture, she says, "Have confidence and follow through on what your life purpose is and what your goals are. Never doubt yourself and make sure you have a good support system. I have my husband, dear friends, and family members including my brother, who is a 'foodie,' and my sister-in-law who is making us planters for the spring."



• INDIGENOUS CULTURAL DEMONSTRATIONS • MEET THE ARTISTS •

2026 AKWESASNE ART MARKET



JULY 17-18
GENERATIONS PARK
AKWESASNE, NY

EXPERIENCE
Akwesasne



Kawenni:ios 13

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council Awards Over \$1.12 million in Community Support Funding to Akwesasne Non-Profit Organizations for Fiscal Year 2026

Made Possible by the Tribal General Fund

**Jori Rourke,
Chief of Staff**

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) recognizes the important and impactful work performed by non-profit entities within the Akwesasne community each year. The Tribe has for many years contributed from the Tribal General Fund (TGF) to such organizations that have demonstrated significant positive impact to the health, welfare, safety and education of community members. The TGF are those funds contributed by Tribal enterprises, such as the Mohawk Gaming Enterprise and from fees collected from tobacco, alcohol, petroleum by tribally-licensed businesses.

The main mission of Community Support Program is to financially assist Akwesasne Non-Profit Organizations and groups working within the community to provide services to promote health, welfare, safety, and education.

The Tribal Council is proud to share the 2026 recipients of Community Support Funds:

Akwesasne Boys and Girls Club	\$455,000
Seven Dancers Coalition	\$201,919
Sewakwatho, Recovery Drop-In Center	\$155,485
Holistic Life Foundation – Akwesasne	\$150,000
Haudenosaunee Everlasting Academy of Learning	\$100,000
Akwesasne Cultural Center	\$60,000

Community Support recipients are required to adhere to following funding conditions:

- Submit an annual expenditure report to certify that funds are properly utilized in accordance with funding proposal;
- Maintain records and financial documents for five (5) years after all funds have been expended;
- Return any unspent funds to the Tribe by Enniskó:wa/March 31, 2027;
- Express positive messages acknowledging the Tribe's support, submit and permit relevant photos for the Tribe's use; and
- Present at monthly Tribal meetings upon request.

The Tribe is grateful to continue Community Support Program funding and is proud to share that a total of \$1,122,404 was disbursed to Akwesasne Non-Profit organizations for fiscal year 2026.

In addition, the Community Support Program financially supports the Heating Assistance Program, budgeted at \$2.32 million annually; the Akwesasne Streetlight Safety Initiative; Community Advocacy Program's Winter Jacket program; cemetery upkeep; and Medical Hardship for Alternative or Non-Covered Care.

Please join us in congratulating the 2026 Community Support recipients!



Artist Spotlight: SueAnn Swamp

Haley Shattuck, Graphic Designer

For SueAnn Swamp, owner of the traditional clothing and beadwork company Oak Flower Design Co. and Oak House Flowers, creativity is not confined to a studio or a single medium. It is in the rhythm of a sewing machine at work and in the fresh blooming flowers of a hand-made garden bed. As an artist and farmer, SueAnn has built a life that is based on both traditional practices and modern design.

"I remember being very interested in art as a child," SueAnn said. "I don't think I was talented in any specific style, I just really enjoyed creating things and being crafty." That early curiosity manifested into a passion during her first pregnancy when her sister gifted her a sewing machine. SueAnn set a simple goal to create a small blanket and a few outfits for her baby. "It turned into something



so much more," she said. "Sewing and beadwork has really become a passion and a source of comfort for me over the years."

Today, sewing is not only a creative outlet but also a therapeutic activity for SueAnn. Her favorite part of the process is selecting fabrics. Discovering beautiful and intriguing pieces of fabric inspires her to enhance it, and from that point, she allows the piece to develop naturally. "The process of sewing a piece from start to finish is therapeutic for me, it's very straight forward and I enjoy the flow of it," she said.

Her beadwork follows a different path. While sewing offers structure, beadwork allows for spontaneity. "I usually have an idea in my head of what the piece might look like, but I free hand my work often so the idea can change throughout the journey," SueAnn said. "I like that because the finished work is unique and unexpected."

Nature continues to be SueAnn's greatest inspiration. Her color palette leans toward earthy tones, grounding each creation in the environment that surrounds her. At the same time, she intentionally blends a modern edge into her designs while remaining reflective of her traditional culture.



SueAnn is currently focusing on expanding her custom design work. One of her recent creations showcases this: a summer dress designed to be worn casually or elevated with detachable regalia. "I recently created a summer dress that can be worn every day or dressed up with regalia,"

she said. "It's a new, innovative design I'm interested in expanding on in the future."

While art is one expression of her creativity, the land is another.

Nearly 12 years ago, SueAnn joined the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Akwesasne Cultural Restoration program as an apprentice. Over the years, she immersed herself in learning about food sovereignty, agricultural sustainability, and food preservation techniques. The experience shaped not only her skillset but also her cultural identity. "I'm grateful to all my mentors and all the knowledge I gained throughout the four-year journey," she said. "The program brought me closer to my language and culture, which was the best part for me."

Through Oak House Flowers, SueAnn grows food, medicinal herbs and cut flowers. Flower farming became a more recent creative outlet, one that combines her love of art and the natural world. "Flowers bring art and nature together in such a beautiful way. It feels great knowing I'm providing a positive benefit to the pollinators," she said. Holistic-centered agriculture requires patience and blind trust, she explained. Gardening can be unpredictable, but her cultural teachings guide her perspective.

"My favorite part is thinking of the many pollinators, soil microbes, rain storms, and more helping me throughout my growing season," SueAnn said. "Being a part of the natural system and working with it in a healthy way is my favorite part of holistic-centered agriculture."

Looking ahead, SueAnn plans to continue advocating for food sustainability and encouraging community members to grow their own food and flowers. A significant part of that vision includes expanding her farm offerings to feature healthy foods, and working with SRMT Office of Economic Development (OED) to develop an immersive on-farm tourism

experience. By partnering with OED, SueAnn hopes to create opportunities for visitors and community members to visit a living, growing space that reflects traditional Indigenous values. These experiences are designed not simply as tours, but as a connection to the land and culture found in a natural garden environment. "I want people to experience the joy of being in a natural garden environment," she said. "Cut flowers are especially fun, unique, and healing to be around and I want Oak House Flowers to reflect that."

Whether SueAnn is creating custom garments and free handing beadwork, or planting seeds and cutting flowers, her work shares a common goal to create something meaningful that connects us to the land. Her work is a reminder that by creating with intention and nurturing the land, we can strengthen our bonds with one another and with the natural world. Ensuring that what we cultivate today will nourish Akwesasne for generations to come.

"Growing food, flowers, and medicine is something I will always do, and I hope to inspire others to do the same."
- SueAnn Swamp





2025 Structures of the Year Award

Katelynn Delormier
A/ Director, CMC

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe proudly accepted the American Public Works Association (APWA) 2025 “Structures of the Year Award” for the la'teiewenhnaní'haras, meaning an “echo” that “reaches far away,” Amphitheater at a ceremony held on February 12, 2026 at Sky Armory in Syracuse, New York.

Tribal Sub-Chief Derrick King and Sub-Chief Sweets Jacobs represented the Tribe, accepting the award in place of Director of Planning and Infrastructure Colleen Thomas, who was unable to attend. Sub-Chief Derrick King shared, “It was a tremendous honor and privilege to accept the award for the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe. This award acknowledges the project’s exceptional blend of modern design and structural integrity—an ode to the collaborative effort of the creative minds who turned a community-led vision into a reality.”

The award recognizes projects in the public works sector that positively impact communities with respect to the Central New York Branch—an APWA chapter consisting of over ten New York counties. The Amphitheater was selected for “demonstrating outstanding achievements in management, administration, and implementation of the community infrastructure development project” according to apwa.org

Designed by Beardsley and built by Danko Construction, the Amphitheater features a state-of-the-art open-air amphitheater shell, outdoor seating for 500 people, shaded structures, washrooms, and for additional recreational purpose the project includes: two volleyball courts, a basketball court and a special event parking lot.

The idea to construct a bandshell for community use came to former Tribal Chief Eric Thompson as one of his last initiatives on Council, he shared, “The thought behind the amphitheater is to create a space for artistic creativity, specifically the performing arts. To give young people in the community an area to practice, or otherwise showcase their talents.”

Emphasizing the value add to our Mohawk artist community, he continued, “Not every child in Akwesasne has an inclination or proclivity to be involved in sports, and I thought equal time and space should be given on the tribal campus to those children who may not be interested in, or excel at team sports. This amphitheater will be used to foster positivity and show the versatility of our community members in the performing arts whatever those arts may be.”



Since the completion in 2025, the Amphitheater has been home to movie screenings, fashion shows, community events, live entertainment, and so much more. Thompson shared, “Colleen and her team did a fantastic job bringing the idea to fruition and building a venue as evidenced by the recognition of the APWA Structures of the Year Award for 2025. The award shines a light on the creative and excellent team we have in the Planning and Infrastructure Division and recognizes the importance of the creative performative space that has been created for Akwesasró:non.”

“The design firm for the amphitheater, Beardsley Architects + Engineers, submitted this project for consideration to APWA. I am so pleased our efforts on this impactful community project have received state-wide recognition. They have been great allies to our community, who help bring my ideas to life while keeping in mind our unique customs and practices,” Colleen Thomas, Planning and Infrastructure Director.

Interested performers, artists, and organizations can reserve the amphitheater through Parks and Recreation Manager, Amberdawn Lafrance by email at amberdawnlafrance@srmt-nsn.gov. For a full listing of 2026 events at the Amphitheater, follow the Generations Park Facebook Page.



Mia McDonald
Youth Services Manager

Since time immemorial, the Onkwehonwe People have used Grandmother Moon, the teller of time and seasons, as a guiding light for traditional agriculture practices. In 2025, my husband and I started Kahétakon, meaning “in the garden.” With access to my family’s idle farmland and an eagerness to bring fresh vegetables, flowers, fruits, and medicines to the community, we ventured into agrotourism hand-in-hand.

To guide our journey, we partnered with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe’s Office for Economic Development to create lasting relationships and build a network with other farmers and business owners. Through this network we’re able to lean on others for support, participate in seed-sharing, and knowledge keeping of traditional and modern gardening techniques.

Though we started with little gardening knowledge and experience, we let our relationship with the garden—how it fulfills our mind and spirit, forges a deeper connection between us, the land, the water, and sky—be our guide.

It’s this very connection and the traditional wisdom we carry that has led us to planting with the cycles of Grandmother Moon.

Each of her moon phase carries a significant meaning, guiding our ceremony cycles and our own human cycles. Using this methodology, we rely not only on what phase the moon is in at the time of planting, we take into consideration the way the ground feels, the way the water is flowing, and the way we feel as human beings.

When planting, it is important to remember your intention. When we plant with intention, we share our good mind, or *kanikonriio* with that plant. In return, we hope to receive a bountiful harvest. We speak love into our seeds, water them, and ensure the journey from seed to fruit is one rooted in kindness—a positive difference that you can taste when it comes time to harvest.



The general guidelines that have been followed for centuries are:

Waxing Moon: From the time of New Moon to Full Moon, it’s encouraged to plant your ABOVE ground crops and annual flowers. This includes corn, beans, squash, tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, tobacco, zinnias, marigolds, cosmos etc.

Waning Moon: From the Full Moon to the New Moon, it’s encouraged to plant your below ground crops and perennial flowers. This includes carrots, potatoes, onions, flowering bulbs, lavender, bee balm, yarrow, echinacea, etc.

Full Moon Dates for the Spring 2026 growing season include:

Pink Moon on April 2, 2026: Ideal for spring planting and encouraging, strong, fast growth of root vegetables and perennials; such as carrots, beets, potatoes and radishes.

Flower Moon on May 1, 2026: Best for late spring/early summer crops as it marks the peak of spring. This includes cucumbers, eggplants, melons, and herbs.

Blue Moon on May 31, 2026: A rare second full moon in May, perfect for a mid-season replanting or second succession of crops. This is also a great time to harvest any early leafy greens and herbs; as they will have peak moisture content

This hybrid style of planting with moon phases, companion planting, traditional growing practices and modern techniques, truly makes an impact on your harvest. Rather than treating the seeds like just seeds, we treat them like relatives. We care for and nurture them in the best way we know how. In return, they take care of us and provide us with nutrition and sustenance to thrive. It becomes a reciprocal relationship based in love and well-being. There are many ways to plant a garden, but a garden planted with love, ancestral knowledge, and good intentions is a garden like no other.

Kahétakon will be a participating vendor at the 2026 Akwesasne Farmers Market, you are all welcome to stop by and see what we have in season!





Stepping Into Spring: A Season of Renewal and New Life

Madison Breen
Communications Officer

By Spring, the excitement of sticking to our New Year's resolutions wears thin. The best thing about the changing of seasons is that it offers renewal and new life. The change from winter to spring brings new beginnings. Just like the flowers and the plants are starting to grow themselves, new life begins.

So what are you doing to grow this season?

The answer doesn't have to be substantial; it can be something small, something simple. It could be opening the windows to let in fresh air or setting small attainable goals that you can build on each day. Even the smallest changes, like spending 15 minutes outside, can shift your perspective.

For me, a change of seasons brings a new light and a renewed sense of hope, and an opportunity to become a better version of myself. As we move into spring, here are a few ideas to help you refresh, reset, and start moving again after a long, cold winter.

Take a Walk at the Kahrhaká:ion Nature Trail

This trail opened up in late 2024 and has provided the community with a peaceful walking path. The trail offers incredible views and serenity right here in Akwesasne.

Soaking Up Sunshine at Skén:nen Park

The days are longer, and the sun has returned. Even 15 minutes outside can improve mood and overall well-being. Walk along the St. Regis River, sit on a bench, or simply pause and breathe in the fresh air. No big commitments or big long workouts, just smaller steps towards feeling lighter.

Start Something New

Spring is all about the new! New life, new adventures, what about new hobbies? Pick up a hobby that you've been curious about. Ask a friend what they enjoy, or even get yourself a library card. Try the Akwesasne Library to find new interests, hobbies, or even carve out some time for personal growth. The Akwesasne Library is open Monday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday - Friday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.



Free Community Programs

As Spring unfolds, many community programs come back to life with events designed for connection, wellness, and learning. From environmental gatherings like the annual Seed Symposium to outreach events, wellness activities, and cultural celebrations, there are countless opportunities to get involved. Make sure you check out srmt-nsn.gov/calendar for all Tribal events.

Maybe you've never attended a Tribal community event before. This season could be your invitation.



Take an Akwesasne Adventure

Visit a local business, take a class, or explore a shop you've never stepped into before. Grab a coffee and wander. Support a local business. Try a new food option for dinner.

If you're looking for a special local escape, explore Akwesasne Travel's web site akwesasne.travel and learn more about fun, immersive experiences offered by artisans here at home.

Adventure doesn't always require you to leave your hometown; sometimes it just requires curiosity. No matter what you choose this season, step into spring with hope, optimism, and a willingness to become just a little more of who you're meant to be.

WE ONLY HAVE ONE EARTH LET'S TAKE CARE OF IT



CELEBRATE EARTH DAY ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026

Leadership Update: Border Partners, Knowing Your Rights, and the Jay Treaty Border Alliance

A/ Director, CMC
Katelynn Delormier

Change in the U.S. presidential administration in 2025 brought with it a more robust approach to immigration policy and subsequent changes in the relationship with Indigenous tribes throughout the country. Given our proximity to the U.S. - Canada border, this change has been a cause for concern within the community due to frequent border crossings to attend doctor appointments, get groceries, and go to school, and work.

It is important to remain diligent and know your rights as Onkwehonweneha while roaming Turtle Island freely. You do not need a visa or a green card but, you must be able to prove your status. As a precautionary measure, always carry your Blood Quantum letter, Indian Status card or Tribal Enrollment card. Familiarize yourself with the Jay Treaty of 1794, granting Native American's the right to study, travel, and work in the United States, to reference if you are stopped by outside law enforcement. Keep important contact numbers handy—Tribal leadership, SRMT Police Department—in case you are stopped without an articulable reason.

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police Department (SRMTPD) has longstanding partnerships with federal, provincial, and state law enforcement agencies. Tribal Chief of Police Matthew Rourke stated, **"We have regular border partners meetings with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Canada Border Services Agency, Tribal Council, and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne."**

These partnerships exist due to a strong foundation built upon mutual respect and clear communication, with no exceptions or exemptions for agencies attempting to bypass Tribal sovereignty. Through these mutually respectful relationships, Tribal



Police, Council, and outside agencies collaborate and meet on a regular basis with the shared mission of achieving a strong and safe community.

The Tribal Council and Tribal Police are active partners in the Jay Treaty Border Alliance (JTBA), where Tribal Chief Michael Conners serves as co-chair alongside leaders from other First Nations communities.

Formed in 2017, the JTBA's mission is to create a working group of leaders from Tribal and First Nations and law enforcement for the protection of Indigenous peoples' inherent rights to cross the U.S.-Canada border freely, as affirmed by the 1794 Jay Treaty.

Tribal Chief Michael Conners shared, **"The JTBA allows us to have a direct relationship with federal border agencies on both sides and our sister nations, allowing us to share knowledge and work towards advancing inherent border rights, not just for Akwesasne, but for all Indigenous people born in Canada."**

Tribal leadership will continue to provide on-going education, support and assistance to Tribal members, as well as regular community updates through social media and the Tribal monthly meetings, as we navigate the ever-changing political landscape together.



AKWESASNE HOUSING AUTHORITY (AHA)



Mose Herne A/ Assistant Executive Director

The mission of the Akwesasne Housing Authority (AHA) is to address the housing needs of enrolled Tribal members living on or near the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal (SRMT) reservation through a comprehensive housing program. The AHA seeks to promote community strength and prosperity through safe housing, supportive ventures, economic development, and program efficiency. The goals of the Akwesasne Housing Authority are to meet the demand for safe and sanitary housing by increasing homeownership and rental opportunities for low- to moderate-income families, and to develop initiatives that will address specialized housing and other community needs.

The AHA was established by Tribal Council Resolution 84-13 on July 19, 1984, based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) model Indian Housing Tribal Ordinance. Starting in 1985, the AHA has administered HUD grants awarded to the (SRMT) and has received the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) Block Grant funds since 1996. AHA manages several housing programs that serve the community.

Sunrise Acres Complex

The Sunrise Acres complex consists of 83 reduced rent apartments for Tribally-enrolled elders. The layout of the complex resembles a "gated" community to help

ensure privacy and safety for residents. The AHA services the entire complex including garbage pick-up, lawn care, snow removal, on-call maintenance and a housing service coordinator for needs assessments. Tenants also enjoy a covered pavilion with seating, a propane grill, tables, and bathrooms for use during the warmer months.

The complex includes 15 four-unit buildings, one three-unit building, and one two-unit building that together provide 65 two-bedroom apartments for low income elderly residents. Priority placement is offered first to individuals aged 62 and older, with secondary priority for those aged 55 and older. Each apartment features Energy Star appliances, including a range and oven, refrigerator, microwave, and a walk in storage closet.

Sunrise Acres Supportive Housing (SASH) and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) provides safe and affordable independent living for Tribally-enrolled seniors and veterans who are disabled and in need of more supportive living. SASH/VASH is not



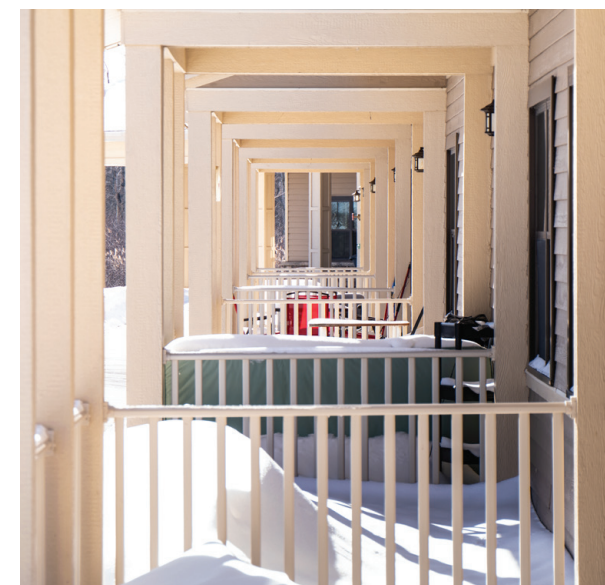
intended for seniors or veterans who require assisted living or for those needing 24-hour care. Supportive housing consists of 12 units while veterans housing consists of six units, with four units dedicated to providing permanent and stable housing to unhoused veterans. All are on the ground level and handicap accessible.

Eligibility requirements include elderly, disabled, or veteran head of household and enrolled member of the SRMT. All applicants must also provide verification of social security number, notarized release of information, proof of annual income, ability to live independently, and for veterans their DD-214.

Homeownership Programs

The AHA has supported the construction of more than 400 homes over its 42 year history through its homeownership programs. The Mutual Help Program, which closed to new applications in 2013, assisted low to moderate income families who had land and were seeking to become homeowners. The program offers a maximum term of 25 years, with payments based on household income to ensure long term affordability. There are currently 62 homes still active in the Mutual Help Program.

The new Kahwá:tsire Housing Development aims to make home ownership a reality for low-to moderate-income families and to help enrolled members build a strong foundation for long-term financial growth. These 1,500 square feet homes are situated on a 31-acre site located off Helena Road. Some homes are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant. Applicants must be enrolled members with children, meet income and credit requirements, and provide a declaration of no ownership of suitable land. Homes are geared toward families that might otherwise struggle with home ownership and selection of applicants is through a lottery system drawing from the pool of qualified candidates.



Housing Services

The AHA provides housing services that include loan assistance, supported by two loan specialists on staff. While the AHA does not issue loans or mortgages directly, it offers guidance with preparation, documentation, and the application process.

Native American Direct Loan Program

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers VA-direct loans to help Native American veterans buy, build, or improve a home on federal trust land through the Native American Direct Loan (NADL) program. Benefits of this program include a low fixed interest rate, no down payment, no Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI), and limited closing costs. NADL loans are also reusable, meaning a veteran can purchase more than one home successively or concurrently, and can be refinanced using the VA Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan (IRRRL) through a preferred lender. Veterans must have a VA Home Loan Certificate of Eligibility (COE) and proof of income and ability to meet VA's flexible credit standards to apply. The home the veteran is seeking to buy, build, or improve using NADL funds must also be the veteran's principal residence.



USDA Section 502 Direct Loan Program

This program assists low, and very low income applicants obtain decent, safe and sanitary housing in eligible rural areas by providing payment assistance to increase an applicant's repayment ability. Payment assistance is a type of subsidy that reduces the mortgage payment for a short time. The amount of assistance is determined by the adjusted family income. The current interest rate is 4.875% and offers up to a 33-year payback period, or 38 years for very low income applicants (at the discretion of the USDA). Funds can be used to build, repair, renovate or relocate a home.

Section 184 Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program

The Section 184 program is a home mortgage product specifically designed for Tribal members that features low down payments with flexible underwriting. These loans can be used for both on and off reserve lands, new construction, rehabilitation, purchasing of an existing home, or refinance. Currently, the only financial institution that assists



Tribal members with these loans in Akwesasne is 1st Tribal Lending. These loans are popular for those with higher incomes, but open to all. The loan is limited to single-family housing (one to four units), and fixed-rate loans for 30 years or less. Neither adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) nor commercial buildings are eligible for Section 184 loans.



Go Solar Program

The AHA completed a 617 kW solar photovoltaic facility in March 2020. The electricity generated by this facility is distributed through National Grid's Community Distributed Generation Program. Participants enroll for a three-year term, during which solar credits are applied directly to their National Grid bills. In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the program has delivered significant financial benefits, with participants saving up to 80% on their energy costs.

Down Payment Assistance for the USDA 184

The AHA also offers down payment assistance program to help new low-to-moderate income homebuyers applying for USDA 184 Loan Program mortgages, with down payments to cover the additional expense of closing costs. The assistance will then lower the mortgage amount for the new homebuyers.

Tenant Assistance Program

The Tenant Assistance Program is a short term (two-year limit) rental subsidy program designed with a built-in family self-sufficiency component. Families will learn to plan for a life goal that is consistent with the program mission, and will be administered through scheduled one-on-one meetings with the Housing Services Advocate and participate in regular classes planned to meet their goals. Active participation is required by the recipient of such assistance in order to remain in the program.

Community Education

The AHA's housing services include financial literacy

courses designed to strengthen the community's financial readiness. These sessions feature guest speakers and provide education on building credit, reducing debt, banking, and financial practices that support long term homeownership.

Homebuyer education courses are also offered to prepare individuals for the homeownership process. These classes are open to the public, though they are required for some AHA programs as well as certain loan and mortgage products. Course topics include the steps involved in purchasing a home, working with banks and realtors, budgeting, credit and credit repair, home shopping, inspections, homeowners' insurance, and available homebuyer programs.

Additional homeownership courses focus on the responsibilities of maintaining a home, covering topics such as basic home maintenance and planning for future repairs and upkeep. The AHA also provides one on one advisement for credit building and budgeting.

Looking ahead, the AHA plans to expand its educational services to include basic home maintenance workshops and additional sessions aimed at supporting community members in becoming successful, informed homeowners.



Mooneye: A Threatened Fish Species

Spencer Alascio
Aquatic Biologist, SRMT Water Resources Program

If you've spent time along the St. Regis or Raquette Rivers, you may have heard people talk about a sleek, silver fish called the mooneye *Hiodon tergisus*, especially in recent years. Mooneye are an astonishing fish with bright silver-scales, with adults reaching nearly one foot long. They mainly eat insects, both from the water and from the land, and often move and feed in schools. Because they move in groups, mooneye can seem locally abundant in spots at certain times, even if they're rare across a wider region, making careful monitoring especially important.

Mooneye once occupied rivers across northern and western New York, within the Great Lakes watersheds. Today, they are classified as a threatened species in New York, meaning their populations have declined enough to raise real concern about their long-term future.

Over the past few years, researchers and conservation partners in northern New York have been working to answer some basic but important questions: Where are mooneye still found? Is the population healthy enough to last long term? What actions can we take to help them thrive in the region? These questions are key to building a practical conservation plan grounded in local data and focused on the rivers and habitats on which mooneye still rely.

An important advancement came with the Fish Enhancement Mitigation Research Fund (FEMRF) funding that strengthened the community assemblage monitoring effort conducted in collaboration with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Environment Division. The 2014-2015 project documented that mooneye were found at 10 different locations within Tribal boundaries on the lower St. Regis and Raquette Rivers. That's a meaningful finding for a species that can be hard to detect consistently and may be absent from areas where it was once common.

Between the years of 2024 and 2025, there were five different samplings to learn more about the mooneye population. By looking at the different demographic of this species, researchers can tell whether the population is successfully reproducing and supporting multiple generations.

This helps to determine if there are only a few fish scattered throughout the region or if there is a self-sustaining population present in the region.

Looking ahead, an exciting development involves alternative methods for how mooneye are tracked. Several of our samples have been sent to the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service for genetic sequencing, where they will develop a marker specific to mooneye which can be used in the same way we are using environmental DNA (eDNA) collected from water samples to track the movement of walleye during the spring spawning migration. This method relies on capturing tiny pieces of tissue from the species of interest, and is becoming a common method for detecting rare fish species.

This can allow us to consistently monitor the population while reducing the number of fish collected. By learning where mooneye is and how their populations are structured, we can take informed steps to protect habitat, monitor change, and support the recovery of a unique and vulnerable fish.

To keep up with the Water Resources Program follow the SRMT Environment Division on Facebook or visit <https://www.srmt-nsn.gov/environment-division>.





Alcoholism/Chemical Dependency Prevention: Cultural Enrichment Week!



From February 17-20, SRMT Alcoholism/Chemical Dependency Prevention (A/CDP) Program provided students with a week of cultural enrichment and adventure! Students learned about cultural activities such as creating corn husk dolls, sweetgrass turtles, making pottery and animal tracking. These activities got them out and taught them some useful lessons in not only culture and the value of their heritage, but also on the importance of living a drug and alcohol free-life while caring for your mental and physical wellness using traditional teachings.

On the final day, the students visited the Akwesasne Cultural Center and Library where they were able to view and ask questions about significant cultural items and listen to the Creation Story told by local artist and storyteller Arihonni David.





SAINT REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE
Ronthahiohsthà:ke
A/CDP Clubhouse

"CULTURE IS THE KEY TO LIVING A
 HEALTHY DRUG & ALCOHOL FREE LIFESTYLE."

RONTHAHIOHSTHÀ:KE A/CDP CLUBHOUSE

Hours of Operation

Mon, Wed - Fri:
 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Sat:
 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



At the Diabetes Center for Excellence,
 66 Margaret Terrance Memorial Way, Akwesasne



518-333-0221



Ages 13 to 20

WINTER SEED PROCESSING SUSTAINS RESTORATION EFFORTS IN AKWESASNE

McKay Burley, SRMT Land Resources Program Plant Nursery Technician
 Haley Shattuck, Graphic Designer

While Winter is often mistaken for a pause in land conservation, it marks one of the most important phases of work for the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Land Resources Program's Native Plant Nursery. Long before seeds ever reach storage or soil, plant nursery technicians spend the growing season scouting native seed collection locations of genetic relevance within a 100-mile radius of Akwesasne. Plant Nursery technician McKay Burley stated, "Having established agreements and understandings with Federal, State, and local townships, the Land Resources Program Nursery Technicians have been able to collect at least 28 species in 2025." Once harvested, seeds

are carefully stored until the collection season concludes, then brought indoors as winter begins. This is when processing work moves into full focus.

Seed processing during the winter months is both methodical and adaptive, tailored to each species' needs. Dried herbaceous seed heads are collected



and placed in paper bags or drying chambers for preservation. Dried herbaceous seed heads are the mature, dried flowering or fruiting parts of non-woody plants that remain after the petals have fallen or the leaves have faded. Berries and drupes, also known as stone fruits, are stored in refrigerators to ferment, a natural process that helps loosen and separate seeds from their outer

coverings. The Land Resources Program uses a wide range of cleaning techniques, including water, air, fire, mechanical crushing and stomping, and everyday kitchen appliances and sieves, to remove debris and prepare seeds for storage. The goal is to get seeds as clean and dry as possible, reducing the risk of mold and

damage to the life that lives within the seed. When stored properly in cold conditions, native seeds can remain viable for years, or even decades.

As winter gives way to early spring, the plant nursery technicians' focus shifts once more from seed processing to growing. Beginning in March,

nursery technicians start following a stratification schedule, which is a horticultural practice that breaks seed dormancy by mimicking natural, cold-moist, or warm-moist false winter conditions to trigger germination. Some species require no stratification at all, responding only to the warmth and light that spring provides. Others demand more complex care, ranging from 30 to 120 days in dampened strata at roughly 40 degrees, or alternating cycles of cold and warm temperatures until double dormancy is completed. Burley said, "Through propagation guides, help from mentors, experience, and hope, these seeds will in the coming year(s) become plants the program can use to restore shorelines of Akwesasne, provide learning opportunities, bring more beauty to public spaces, and offer medicine to the community."

While the land rests beneath snow, the future of restoration is already taking root, one seed at a time.

Kakwitè:ne | Spring 2026



www.srmt-nsn.gov

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

71 Margaret Terrance Memorial Way, Akwesasne, NY 13655

Ska'tne ionkwaio'te ón:wa wenhniserá:te ne sén:ha aioianerénhake ne enióhrhen'ne
Working Together Today to Build a Better Tomorrow