



## Anishinaabe Agriculture Update Report

Anishinaabe Agriculture staff has worked incredibly hard to bring in harvests of food for the community, conduct field work and research on fiber hemp varieties, train young farmers and develop the model agricultural rotation for the larger fields worked by the project. This has been a challenging time with the instability in Akiing our sister organization, however the staff on the ground in the 1855 territory and White Earth is committed and has carried on amazing work. Our work on Madeline Island changed this year, as we began partnerships with local farmer. We hope to grow that work in the future, but this year did not have any formal programs on the island, as we developed partnerships with local farmers and focused on the land here in the 1855 treaty territory. Anishinaabe Agriculture is working on lands around Pine Point and Round Lake/Ice Cracking Lake, and the Crow Wing Farm in Wadena County. We were generally quite understaffed for our work, but continued to complete work, and sidestep complications associated with the White Earth Tribal Government ( LCCMR Grant and Offutt work), as well as transitions at Akiing. This work has grown and flourished with the leadership of Jerry Lee Chilton, who has been able to bridge the programs and the administrative work with great professionalism, all the while encouraging and growing his staff.



## Hemp Fabrics, Building and New Green Revolution

We are growing a field of dreams, a hemp field across from the Pine Point School, along with some hay, sunflowers ( test crop) and by next year, some beans and kernza, a heritage grain. Fiber hemp is what is in the field, that's the kind of hemp you eat the seeds from (hemp hearts) and this is the kind of hemp you can make building materials from- hemphurd for hempcrete, hemp rebar, hempwood, the whole works.



AAI Director Jerry Lee Chilton is proud of his field, and the work by staff including Nick Bellrock and William Sayers, both from Pine Point. “when you go out there in the early spring, you get hear those birds and then you get to till up your spot there and make it look like art out there, that’s good. It’s good to be proud of what you can grow out there and learn from the older farmers and your ancestors”. This spring,



father/ son Ron and Jerry Lee Chilton, Bellrock and Sayers, along with Hemp Project Coordinator Darren Klarer planted 46 acres of hemp on a field just south of the Pine Point Elementary School. This work also exemplifies the growth of a new generation of leaders, as Jerry Lee Chilton comes into leadership of the organization, having been trained by Ronnie Chilton, who retired in the summer of 2023. We are grateful to the growing knowledge and training we have provided historically and will nurture in the future, as that is how a movement and a transition is sustainable.

Two years ago, that field was owned by RDO Offutt, the big potato guys. Now it's planted with fiber hemp, the stuff you make clothes, cars, rebar, housing, and more out of. This is the eighth-year tribal farmers on the White Earth reservation have been planting fiber hemp, and this is the biggest crop. This past year's crop has been sent out to testing with two value added processors for hemp fiber. We have located some cottage scale textile hemp processing equipment, we will begin our work with, but with the generous support of the McKnight Foundation, we will bring on a set of consultants to assist us in working through strategic planning for our fiber hemp crop and value added industries.

AAI has functioned as an excellent research and development project for the value added hemp and this will continue in 2024. Our partners primarily in this are the University of Minnesota ( seed varietals and agronomy) and the LIFT Economy. *Below: George Weible with youth in hemp field, planting feral seeds.*



The federal and state hemp permits have been held by Winona's Hemp for the past eight years, we anticipate that we will transfer the permits to AAI in the 2024 growing season,, excepting the plot of test and heritage varietals which are grown on Winona's Hemp farm.

### **Cooperative Organizing Work**

**We have visited regionally with Dakota and Lakota farmers, and tribal councils working to encourage progressive tribal policies with regards to hemp and farmers. We will need to grow this work out in the upcoming months.**



We did more work in developing a cooperative, but this will take much of the winter. That's to say, that it's essential to have a significant amount of hemp production to feed value added processing for textiles and building materials. While we have three hundred acres plus of agricultural land, this will not fulfill the needs of any scale of hemp processing. That's why we need a cooperative and this will be work over the winter.



The Indigenous Hemp and Cannabis Farmers Cooperative was created in 2022, to support the development of seeds, Indigenous standards, cultivation, value added processing, appropriate technologies and fair-trade markets. We are interested in serving farmers, and ensuring tribal participation in the hemp and cannabis market, as well as the benefits to come to the plant and the community. This year, Anishinaabe Agriculture shared seeds with Dakota and Lakota farmers who are also interested in fiber hemp, and together the farmers are creating a cooperative. Seeds were distributed to the Cheyenne River, Pine

Ridge, Yankton, and Sisseton reservations, and the AAI staff is working with ten farmers in that region. We are hoping to secure more funds to work on all the hemp research and development to grow this cooperative.

There is limited knowledge about growing fields of fiber hemp and processing it, Although more people know how to grow marijuana, these Native farmers want to own seeds, fiber, mills, and build houses, make packaging, paper, foods and more. They also want to grow hemp organically because it can sequester more carbon than any other field crop. Nevertheless, growing to the 1000 or so acres needed for some manufacturing requires cooperation and capital. The Indigenous Hemp and Cannabis Farmers' Cooperative aims to prove that cooperation, not competition, is the way to go. ***Presently, the cooperative is working with the Decolonizing Wealth fund, Windrose Foundation, and the Weibolt Foundation to undertake further organizing work.***

### **Green Building**

This August, we completed the walls on a hempcrete addition to a farmhouse, intended to test technologies with hemp which could be manufactured locally. Working with Homeland Hempcrete, we were able to use pre manufactured panels for the addition, created from hemp hurd, and manufactured in Bismarck, ND. That was a revolutionary method, and the walls were put up in less than six hours. We are now working on the roof, which we anticipate will be completed in the upcoming few weeks. This is the



model for additional housing for elders, up on Ice Cracking Lake and elsewhere. The question we are asking is how to make homes which will last decades and keep our people warm and cool. Jerry Lee Chilton and Darren Killian traveled to Montana to meet with other hemp producers and

processors at IND Hemp to understand the equipment we will need to grow out a cooperative, which processes the hemp. We hope to meet with Bastcore Staff in Alabama on November 6, and also anticipate follow up meetings with the Dakota Hurd Company, to review their equipment and possible collaborations and a processing facility for our hemp. At this point, it is critical that AAI work with farmers and determine value added processing benefits for the hemp.

### **Funds Awarded and Pending for Hemp related work:**

Windrose Foundation- \$12,500 for hemp project organizing work, TBD Weibolt Foundation for staffing of hemp project organizers (likely to include Darren and

Ira Vandever), \$25,000 Grant ( awarded November 1) for technical assistance and development of the hemp fiber project from the Fiber Fund. \$75,000 initial grant from the Decolonizing Wealth Fund for the Hemp Value added work to develop the cooperative.

**Hemp Textile Work:**

This September. Patagonia brought to market a work bag using fiber hemp



**Food in the Village, Horses, Farming, and Goats**



*( Photo Kara and Jerry Lee, Shiyaa and Bud planting hemp Pine Point.*

*Anishinaabe Agriculture wishes to grow out the food programs in the Pine Point*



village To do this we need staff. This year, our staff was small , yet mighty.







**Crow Wing Watershed Shell River Alliance:**

Anishinaabe Agriculture submitted a successful proposal to the LCCMR to

conduct water quality surveys in the Shell River Basin. This project is with the University of Minnesota, and the White Earth band was to be the fiscal agent. The project was taken over by the White Earth band, through the work of Jamie Konapacky, who was then counsel for the White Earth band and working on environmental issues, including the tribal moratorium on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations or CAFOS on the reservation. This has been very successful work and is coming under a lot of pressure by non native farmers.

This spring, there was a good deal of discussion and correspondence between AAI and the University of Minnesota and LCCMR about the inappropriate moving of the project to the White Earth Band. At this point, the project has continued, and seems to be doing well, without our participation, Jamie Konapacky left the White Earth Tribe formally and is coordinating the project for the band and with the University of Minnesota.

In the meantime, major reports on the abuse of water permits by RDO Offutt have come to light, through a New York Times expose. The fact is that the environmental crimes of RDO continue and impact our village and community. We hope to continue work on Offutt, including completion of an update report on Offutt, which will be completed sometime this winter. We also hope to continue working with the Shell River Alliance, a group of Native and non Native people who can work to protect the watershed. In July, a small gathering was held at the Shell City Campground, attended by fifty people over the course of the weekend. It was an opportunity to share updates on the health of the river and the work ahead on water quality and monitoring Enbridge. This summer, the Shell River Alliance is celebrating one year of forming diverse, and intentional partnerships with a variety of stakeholders in the Shell River watershed. Responding to concerns over water quality, quantity, and larger concern over riparian habitats in the watershed, the Alliance was formed a year ago to more easily advocate on behalf of the watershed. The Alliance has facilitated relationships between farmers, conservationists, recreational users of the river, scientists, water protectors, indigenous nations, and county water districts using a variety of advocacy strategies, including education, engagement, and research. The Shell River Alliance is also pleased to welcome two interns to its team. One intern is an employee at the Hubbard County Area Water and Sanitation District, and is an important liaison between the alliance and the county body. The other intern is a graduate student at Yale studying the impact of forever plastics in groundwater in the area. These interns are providing valuable insights, and are a key part of the exciting strides the Alliance has made over the past year.

### **Horses in the Village**



Kara Knowles is working with the Green Riders Program, joined by lead riders Sasha Richards (her daughter) and Leroy Maurstad from Pine Point Village.

Kara has been a horse woman all her life, and is an expert at getting kids and adults comfortable with horses.

Horses are healing animals, a part of Anishinaabe and Dakota culture and history and more). Twenty young people have learned about horses and begun riding with

Kara's help and more

will be joining. In the meantime, Kara's been not only planting hemp crops with horses, but she's been hosting "pony parties" in the village, bringing a lot of smiles to young and old alike.

Our

additional horse  
nation's work has involved  
the growth in ceremonies  
with our youth , involved  
in rides to commemorate  
and honor our ancestors  
and to be a part of the  
healing from trauma. For  
this, our young people  
have ridden numerous  
rides with the Dakota, and  
we will grow more of this  
work as we see the  
potential to heal our

people with horses. Here's a picture from our third year in supporting the Dakota 38 plus 2 ride, commemorating the largest mass hanging in US history. We followed this with four more memorial rides thus far in 2023. The front of the ride includes some of our young riders, carrying the White Earth Flag.

#### **New Staff**

Akiing and Anishinaabe Agriculture want to recognize some of our new staff- particularly Mary Crystal Goggeye , who has come on as a youth coordinator. A Leech Lake and Hopi Tribal member, she has a lot of experience with youth programs, as well as legal aid. Mary is coordinating the logistics of a growing youth program in both the village and in Park Rapids, where the museum we hope will serve highschool aged youth as well, and she will be coordinating the schools coming to the museum. Christy Chilton joined Akiing as an administrative coordinator in the Pine Point community,

working with the growing organizations- Akiing, 8<sup>th</sup> Fire Solar and Anishinaabe Agriculture. Our work is focused on the training and development of this new generation of leadership.

The months ahead. In the upcoming six months, we very much need your support. We have transitioned, grown, undertaken significant research and development in traditional agriculture and hemp and brought on new staff and leadership to carry forward our work. We are hopeful and need general support funds for the upcoming months, to strengthen this work and our future.

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