



OCTOBER
2026

No. 57

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the POARCH CREEK INDIANS

creek corner

*Following
Little River Home*

WHY POARCH IS WHERE IT IS

**TOLOSE EN HOKTEN WAKVN SETENYOPOSKEMVTS
[SINGY THE COW] SELECTED BY UNITED NATIONS**

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**THPO Department
Attends Thlopthlocco
Tribal Town Bridge
Commemoration**

More info on page 27



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CREDITS

Danielle Sanspre
Staff Contributor

Jeanna Morgan
Designer

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FOR ALL OTHER INQUIRIES, please email Sharon Delmar at sdelmar@pci-nsn.gov.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

“October brings a noticeable change of pace. The days begin to feel a little cooler, fall activities fill the calendar, and school, ballgames, and community gatherings bring people together. It’s a season that feels familiar—a time to settle into new routines and enjoy the traditions that come with autumn.

October is also a month that brings attention to two important causes: Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Domestic Violence Awareness Month. While very different, both remind us of the value of awareness, compassion, and support for those who may be facing difficult circumstances.

Sometimes support is simply being present—checking in, listening, offering encouragement, or helping someone find the resources they need. These observances give us an opportunity to learn more and to remember that kindness and understanding can make a meaningful difference in someone’s life.

As we turn the page to autumn, I hope you’ll take time to enjoy the season. And as you turn the pages of this month’s Creek Corner, I hope you’ll enjoy the stories and information shared throughout the issue. **MVTO**

SHARON DELMAR
Editor, Creek Corner

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month—a reminder of the importance of understanding breast health, knowing your personal risk and staying up to date with recommended screenings.

Early detection can make a difference. Screening can help find breast cancer early, sometimes before symptoms appear, when treatment may be more effective. Because screening recommendations can vary based on age, family history and other risk factors, talk with your healthcare provider about what is right for you.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is also an opportunity to support those currently facing breast cancer, celebrate survivors and remember those who have been lost.

LEARN MORE



CDC Breast Cancer Resources

**National Cancer Institute
Breast Cancer Information**



**American Cancer Society
Breast Cancer Fact Sheet
for Patients and Caregivers**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

October is also Domestic Violence Awareness Month—a time to raise awareness, recognize the signs of abuse and remind those experiencing domestic violence that help is available.

Abuse is not always physical. It can include threats, intimidation, isolation, financial control, stalking or attempts to control another person’s choices and relationships. Recognizing these behaviors can be an important first step toward seeking help.

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HELP IS AVAILABLE

StrongHearts Native Helpline

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StrongHeartsHelpline.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

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**If you or someone you know
is in immediate danger, call 911.**



TRIBAL LEADERS

The mission of the Poarch Creek Indians is to protect our inherent rights as a sovereign American Indian Tribe, promote our culture and beliefs, to help our Tribal Citizens achieve their highest potential, maintain good relations with other Indian tribes and units of government, acquire, develop and conserve resources to achieve economic and social self-sufficiency, and ensure that our people live in peace and harmony among themselves and with others.

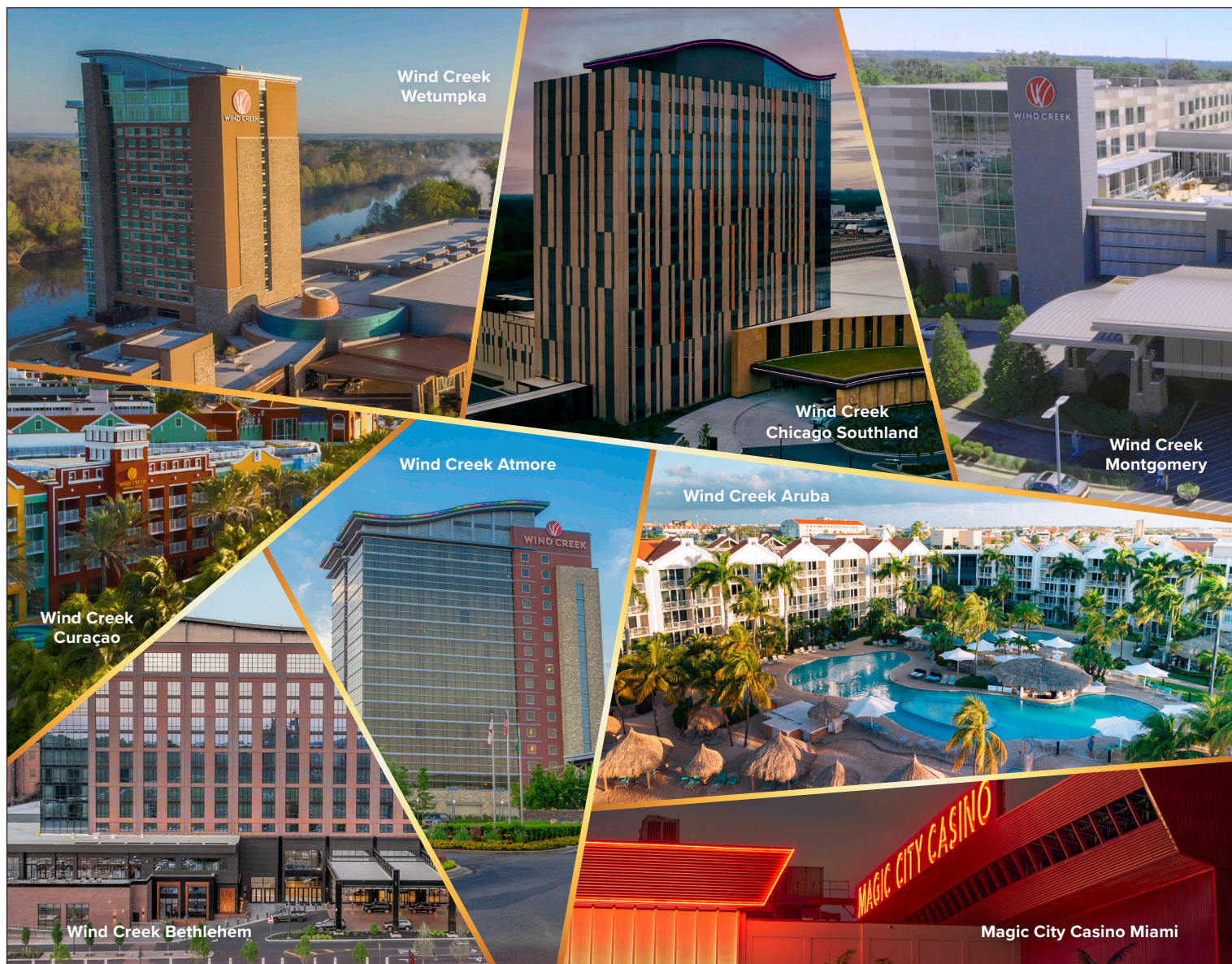
TOP ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT)

Stephanie Bryan, *Tribal Chair*
Robert McGhee, *Vice Chair*
Charlotte Meckel, *Secretary*
Amy Gantt, *Treasurer*

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A HEART FOR THE COMMUNITY

APRIL SELLS | DIRECTOR OF TRIBAL EMERGENCY SERVICES

By Sharon Delmar

April Sells did not set out to build a career in emergency management. With a degree in psychology from the University of Alabama, her professional path seemed headed in an entirely different direction. But in 1992, former Tribal Chairman Eddie Tullis called and asked her to travel to Miami, Florida, for a class on storm preparedness.

At the time, the U.S. Forest Service was providing training on hurricane preparedness, including how to protect important documents and other critical information during a storm. It was Sells' first real introduction to the work that would eventually become her career.

With Hurricane Andrew threatening the region, the training was cut short and participants were told to return home. When Sells returned to Poarch, she sat down with Tullis and shared what she had learned. She also told him something that would prove prophetic: if a position in emergency management ever became available, that was what she wanted to do.

The experience also provided an early lesson in something that would become important throughout her career—the value of Tribal Nations helping one another during a disaster.

After Hurricane Andrew struck Louisiana, the Chitimacha Tribe was among the communities impacted. At the time, relationships between FEMA and federally recognized Tribes were not what they are today, and Tribal Nations did not always have clear access to the resources and assistance they needed following a disaster.

Sells remembers Poarch Creek Indians responding by loading two trailers with supplies—including diapers, formula, feminine products and other necessities—and sending them to the Chitimacha community. Years later, that kindness would be returned.

A CALLING BECOMES A CAREER

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan devastated the Poarch community. At the time, Sells was working at the gym and grieving the recent loss of her brother when Tullis came to her home.

"He said, 'I know that you're grieving the loss of your brother, but I need you to postpone your grieving for a little while, and I need you to come back to work,'" Sells recalled.

The storm and its aftermath ultimately led to the creation of the emergency management position she had envisioned years earlier.

But Poarch did not face the recovery alone. Members of the Chitimacha Tribe were among those who came to help—the same Tribal community Poarch had assisted following Hurricane Andrew. It was a powerful example of Tribal communities supporting one another in times of need and a relationship that had come full circle.

Hurricane Ivan also became one of the most important learning experiences of Sells' career. There was no established blueprint for Tribal emergency management. Relationships between Tribal Nations and state and federal emergency agencies were far different than they are today, and Sells remembers much of the early work as learning by doing.

Experienced emergency personnel helped the Tribe understand what resources were available and what could be requested. A National Guard medic who was also a Tribal Citizen from another Tribe volunteered to check on community members who had been relying on MREs. The American Red Cross arrived to provide meals, and other resources found their way into the community during the prolonged power outage.

"We didn't know what we were doing," Sells said. "That's how we learned." She describes those early years as "trial by fire"—sometimes literally. As Tribal Emergency Services continued to develop, Sells worked closely with former Fire Chief Ronnie Jackson. At the time, the Tribe's Fire Department was still a volunteer service.

After Hurricane Ivan, Sells realized there was more she needed to learn to effectively support Jackson and the fire service during an emergency. She remembers telling Jackson that he needed to find her a school to attend. She enrolled in Volunteer Fire School in Atmore and became a certified volunteer firefighter.

"If I didn't know what I was doing and I couldn't contribute, then I didn't need to be where I was at," she said.

For Sells, it wasn't simply about gaining another certification. She wanted to make sure she had the knowledge and skills to contribute during an emergency without putting Jackson—or anyone else responding



alongside her—at greater risk. That determination to learn, adapt and be prepared has followed Sells throughout her career.

COMMUNITY COMES FIRST

Sells credits much of her approach to leadership to two former Tribal Chairmen who influenced her early career: Buford Rolin and Eddie Tullis. “I learned my sense of direction. I learned my sense of community,” she said. “Community came first to them.”

That philosophy became the foundation of her own work. For Sells, putting the community first does not mean putting family second. “If the community came first, that is your family,” she said.

Strong women in her family provided another powerful example. Her great-grandmother, Margie McGee—known throughout the community as Granny Rock or Sister Rock—was a formidable presence. Sells remembers hearing how, during a time when Indians could be refused service in Atmore restaurants, Granny Rock would walk into the City Cafe, sit down and expect to be served. “She would dare them not to serve her,” Sells recalled. Her influence lasted long after her death. Sells remembers Rolin occasionally considering a community decision and wondering aloud what Sister Rock would have thought about it.

Then there was her grandmother Roberta Sells, who served as secretary for the Tribal Council and helped during the early efforts toward federal recognition. Granny Mabel, while never holding an official Tribal leadership position, was unquestionably a leader within her family.

Sells also saw that legacy of leadership continue through her mother. Together, these women provided examples of strength, determination and service that continue to influence her. “I have been very fortunate to have that influence in my life,” Sells said. “It also helps me make decisions that I make today.”

PREPARED FOR THE UNTHINKABLE

Perhaps no event tested Sells’ years of preparation and experience more than COVID-19. On March 13, 2020, she was attending a FEMA class in Mobile when Alabama’s first COVID-19 case was announced. She returned to Poarch and gathered her staff. “I don’t know what next week’s going to look like,” she remembers telling them. What everyone initially thought might last a few weeks instead became a years-long response.

Within days, Sells was communicating with the State of Alabama, Tribal leadership and Wind Creek Hospitality as information changed rapidly. The Tribe eventually pursued its own federal disaster declaration, giving it greater control over its response.

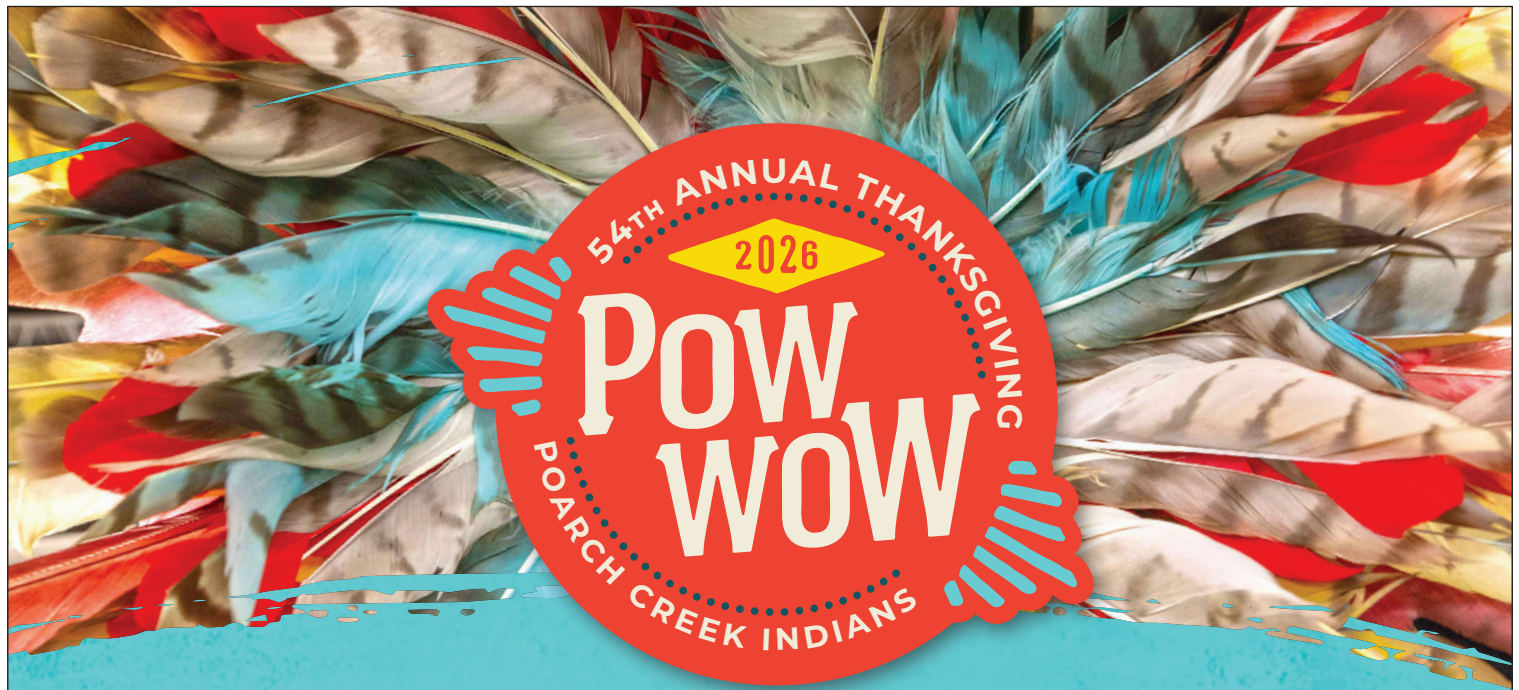
As the response developed, Sells helped establish a COVID health task force. Through a series of connections, she reached Dr. David Thrasher, who agreed to lead the task force and became an invaluable source of medical expertise.

...continued on next page



APRIL SELLS

PCI Director of Tribal Emergency Services



2026

THURSDAY
NOVEMBER 26

ACTIVITIES ON THE MOUND 10:00AM
PRINCESS CONTEST APPROX. 11:00AM
GRAND ENTRY 1:00PM

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 27

GRAND ENTRY NOON



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Sells and the team relied on the best information available to make decisions about masks, contact tracing, reopening plans and products being marketed during the pandemic. Protecting employees also meant thinking beyond the workplace to the vulnerable family members waiting for them at home.

"We had to protect them to protect their families," Sells said.

For Sells, the experience was personal as well as professional. She was determined not to expose her own parents to COVID, even as her work repeatedly placed her in situations where exposure was possible.

She remembers telling her parents that she had spent 15 years preparing for something like this. Emergency planners had long prepared for the possibility of a widespread health emergency; they simply had not known exactly what form it would take.

Looking back, Sells considers the Tribe's response to COVID one of the accomplishments of which she is most proud. But, true to her leadership style, she is quick to redirect the credit.

She points to Tribal leadership, the trust placed in Tribal Emergency Services and the willingness to make difficult decisions based on the best information available.

A PROGRAM OTHERS LOOK TO

The program that began with lessons learned through hurricanes and other emergencies has grown into one recognized beyond the Poarch community. In 2024, Sells was one of just 26 senior crisis leaders selected for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Vanguard Executive Crisis Leaders Fellowship. The national executive leadership program brings together experienced leaders from emergency management, government, business, academia and other sectors to examine emerging challenges in crisis leadership and strengthen the relationships needed to prepare for future emergencies.

That same year, Sells presented a case study on Poarch Emergency Services at the United South and Eastern Tribes Tribal Best Practices Conference, sharing the Tribe's experience with other Tribal Nations.

The recognition reflects something Sells discussed throughout her interview: Poarch's emergency services

program has become an example for others. Other Tribes have looked to Poarch's program as a model, adopting aspects of its approach and reaching out to learn how the Tribe built the partnerships and emergency response capabilities it has today.

Yet Sells remains reluctant to take personal credit for what has been built.

A LEGACY THAT BELONGS TO THE TRIBE

Ask Sells what she hopes her legacy will be, and she resists the premise of the question. "I don't think it is my legacy," she said. "I look at it as the Tribe's legacy."

She points to the trust Tribal leadership placed in someone whose college degree was in psychology and who entered emergency management at a time when there was no established path to follow.

Over the years, that trust helped Poarch Creek Indians build what Sells describes as a robust emergency services program—one that has strengthened the relationship between the Tribe and the State of Alabama and become an example for other Tribal Nations across the country.

Sells also credits the leadership of COO Terry Sweat and Tribal Chair & CEO Stephanie A. Bryan, particularly during COVID, when difficult and sometimes unpopular decisions had to be made.

Other Tribes have approached Poarch with a simple question: How did you do it? For Sells, the answer has never been about one person. It was the Tribe's willingness to trust its people, build relationships, try new approaches and make difficult decisions when circumstances demanded them.

"The legacy is theirs, not mine," she said.

Looking toward the future, her hope for Tribal Emergency Services is equally centered on the community. She knows that one day someone else will lead the department, and when that day comes, she hopes the person who follows her understands the responsibility that comes with the role.

"I just hope and pray that the individual that takes my position one day will have the commitment and the heart that the community deserves."

More than three decades after a trip to Miami first introduced her to emergency preparedness, those words may best summarize Sells' approach to leadership. For her, it has always come back to the community.

2026

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DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

TRIBAL EMERGENCY SERVICES

Prepared For More Than The Storm

By Sharon Delmar



hen people hear “emergency management,” hurricanes and severe weather may be the first things that come to mind. But for Poarch Creek Indians’ Tribal Emergency Services, preparedness extends far beyond hurricane season.

The department’s responsibilities have evolved to meet an increasingly broad range of potential emergencies. Its work includes emergency preparedness planning and response for hurricanes, tornadoes, lightning, flooding and dam-related emergencies, as well as public health events and other unexpected situations that could affect the community.

As Director April Sells explains, the department can be activated for something as large as a major hurricane or as localized as an afternoon thunderstorm affecting one part of the community. COVID-19 demonstrated just how quickly the department’s role can expand when an unexpected emergency arises.

FIRE SERVICES

Tribal Emergency Services also includes the Tribe’s Fire Department, which began as a volunteer fire service and became a paid, full-time fire service in 2009.

The first full-time firefighters began their shifts on February 1, 2009, when Wind Creek Atmore opened and full-time fire coverage became necessary.

Today, the department has 18 firefighters working across three shifts—A, B and C—with each shift working 24 hours on and 48 hours off. The team also includes three captains, a fire chief, assistant fire chief, executive assistant, and logistics and planning officer.

Firefighters operate from two stations: Station 1 on Jack Springs Road and Station 2 on Poarch Road.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Another major advancement has been establishing dedicated ambulance service for the Tribal community.

Sells describes the service as the result of approximately 15 years of work and planning. At the time of her interview, the Tribe was in the second year of a three-year agreement with an ambulance provider, helping ensure emergency medical care is available when the community needs it.

For Sells, that accomplishment represents much of what happens behind the scenes in Tribal Emergency Services: years of preparation, relationship-building and planning before the need ever arises.

PREPARED FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

The work of Tribal Emergency Services is constantly evolving because the emergencies facing a community can take many forms. Severe weather may require one type of response, while a public health emergency may require something entirely different. What remains consistent is the preparation behind that response.

Whether preparing for severe weather, responding to an unexpected public health event, strengthening fire protection or ensuring access to emergency medical services, Tribal Emergency Services works behind the scenes to help protect the community and ensure resources are in place when they are needed most.

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☎ Phone: (251) 272-8975



PICTURED The mouth of Holly Creek Landing where it reaches an old bend of the Alabama River, otherwise known as Boatyard Lake. This is still a beloved fishing spot that many Poarch Creek people drive to.

POARCH 101

Following Little River Home

WHY POARCH IS WHERE IT IS

By the PCI Tribal Historic Preservation Office

The story of how Creek families came together in the place we now call Poarch can be traced across the waterways of Alabama. Since the 1700s, our ancestors lived in towns on the Coosa, Tallapoosa, and down the Alabama River, south past Claiborne and Choctaw Bluff to Little River, which was followed upriver and across creeks leading to the Escambia and Perdido Rivers. For generations, these waterways and the trails between them connected Creek families across a homeland far larger than the community that eventually became known as Poarch.

Of all the rivers and creeks, Little River may be the most significant place to center our story. Follow Little River upstream from its high bluffs on the Alabama River, and you'll arrive in the piney woods to the east, taking you under today's Moniac/Manac Bridge, then up to the Little River State Park. Along the way and by the headwaters, you'll find the places where generations of Poarch Creek ancestors increasingly made their permanent homes after the Creek War of 1813-1814.

This would not have been an unfamiliar wilderness to our ancestors. Long before permanent farms and communities appeared there, Creek people knew and used this interior country widely. Families camped as they ranged cattle across its open lands, hunted deer and gathered other natural resources, and traveled through it as part of a much larger homeland. Places once used seasonally became places where families had to make permanent homes. There was no single migration in which the Poarch Creek people packed their belongings and moved from one village to another. The process unfolded over generations as families followed relatives and lost other lands.

To understand the story better, let's first take a closer look at the label "Tensaw Creeks." People frequently use that term for Creek families living in southwestern Alabama. It has become so common that it can sound as if the ancestors of the Poarch Band came from the Tensaw people, but that is not the case.

The Tensaw River and Tensaw settlement received their names from another Native people, the Taensa. At the time of early European contact, the Taensa lived along the Mississippi River in present-day Louisiana. Warfare eventually pushed them south, and in 1715 they moved into the Mobile region under French protection. They remained for several decades before returning to Louisiana, after Britain took control of Mobile in 1763.

The Taensa were a different people from the Alibamu and other Creek ancestors who had long occupied the Alabama River region. The name Tensaw was left behind, however, staying on maps and remaining in use locally. By the late 1700s and early 1800s, "Tensaw" became the name Euro-Americans used for their growing settlement near the lower Alabama River, where Fort Mims was constructed for military defense.

Because Creek families traded at Tensaw and lived throughout the surrounding countryside, later Euro-American writers began loosely calling many of them "Tensaw Creeks." Also, some Creeks entered Fort Mims for protection during the Creek War, which is the reason the broad "Tensaw Creek" label became so strongly attached to them later on. Many known Creeks have been called Tensaw Creeks because of their blood relations up and down the Alabama River, but they never really lived near the Tensaw settlement.

Many lived, as the crow flies, within about 20 miles from Tensaw, in places like Little River, Choctaw Bluff, Sizemore/Eureka Landing, Hal's Lake, and more. Many other Poarch Creek ancestors, some of which were called Tensaw Creeks because of their blood relations, lived considerably further up the Alabama River, in places such as Claiborne, Durant's Bend, Moniac Island, Autauga, Towassa, Coosada, and right up to Hvcce Fvske (River Point), where the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers join together to form the Alabama River near modern-day Montgomery. Others of our ancestors come from even further up these Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers, from Weetumpky Old Town/Little Tallassee/Hickory Ground, Muklasa, Atasi, Tuckabatchee, and Thlopthlocco.

Interestingly, the documented range of sites of our ancestors from 1700 onward follow a much older pattern seen in archaeology. Deep influences from two closely related Mississippian mound-building centers, Moundville and Bottle Creek, extend up the Alabama River to the Coosa-Tallapoosa confluence, where the Moundville-derived pottery tradition dominates to the west, and the eastern side sees more traditions associated with pottery traditions from Georgia. This rough boundary closely matches historical accounts of where people of the Alabama River Corridor who spoke primarily Alibamu, a Muskogean language, encountered speakers of the Ochese-dialect of the Muskogee language, who started moving westward because of settlers in the Georgia colony.

Over time, the Alibamu became part of the newer political alliance that developed into the Creek Nation or Creek Confederacy. Historical accounts describe conflict followed by peace and alliance, and Caleb Swan recorded in 1791 that the Alibamu and closely related Koasati were among the first distinct peoples incorporated into the Creek Nation. Their identity became part of a broader Creek identity that their Poarch Creek descendants carried forward, which is why Muskogee was the last native language spoken by Poarch Creeks instead of Alibamu.

All things considered, a more helpful way to frame the Creeks living in the broader “Tensaw” region would be to describe their zone as the southwestern corner of this Creek Nation which had formed. The Tensaw settlement was important economically as a nearby trading hub, but it was put outside of the Creek Nation’s borders in 1802.

A twenty-mile boat ride south of the mouth of Little River takes you to Holly Creek (also called Hollow Creek on some old maps). Still used as a boat landing today, this creek meets the Alabama River near Fort Mims. In 1802, Creek and Alibamu headmen formally confirmed Sophia McGillivray Durant’s rights to a vast tract of land stretching between the Alabama River and the Escambia/Conecuh river system. Sophia was the eldest daughter of the powerful Sehoy Wind Clan lineage, and Creek and Alibamu Headmen identified her as their “well beloved cousin and countrywoman,” placing these ancestral lands in her care and that of “her heirs and assigns”.

The written indenture described the tract as extending from the mouth of Holly Creek to the mouth of Limestone Creek on the Alabama River, eastward toward the Escambia, and south toward Saw Mill Creek near Pensacola. The document placed generations of Creek stewardship and matrilineal authority into a written form that American and European governments would recognize. By confirming the land through Sophia and her heirs, Alibamu chiefs and Creek Nation headmen preserved in writing a Creek system in which family authority and responsibility for the land passed through the maternal clan line, even as outside governments increasingly demanded that those relationships be expressed through deeds and legal documents.

The southwestern edge of this tract lay near the Tensaw region at the mouth of Holly Creek. Previously, Creek territory had extended roughly twelve miles farther south to Rice

Creek. Over the following decades, settler encroachment pushed the boundary northward. By 1802, Holly Creek had become an important dividing line. Creek leaders made clear that the lands north of it remained part of Creek Nation, with Sophia and her clan and family being entrusted with responsibility to draw that hard line in the sand. Creek Headman Emistisiguo, from Sophia’s home in Little Tallassee, described the boundary as one that should stand like a “stone wall.”

But they were not appointed to just maintain a random border of the Creek Nation. Sophia’s maternal Alibamu line held a deep relationship with these lands along the Alabama River. George Stiggins, writing in the 1830s, described the Alibamu as an ancient people of this country and connected them with settlements extending from the lower Alabama River northward into certain Upper Creek towns. He wrote that other tribes had named the river for the Alibamu people they found living there.

The written testimony of a man named Ward Coachman is important, since he was a maternal grandson of Sophia McGillivray Durant and a member of the same family at the center of this story. Linguist Albert Gatschet recorded Coachman identifying the towns of the Alibamu and relating an origin tradition remembered by Alibamu elders. According to Coachman, “Old Alabama men used to say that the Alabama came out of the ground near the Alabama River a little up stream from its junction with the Tombigbee, close to Holsifa [Hvse-ofv] (Choctaw Bluff).”

Coachman’s testimony is especially meaningful because of his own maternal ancestry. His mother, Mary “Polly” Durant, was the daughter of Sophia McGillivray Durant and Benjamin Durant and a granddaughter of Sehoy McGillivray. Family accounts identify the Sehoy maternal line as Alibamu. Members of that same family were buried in the area near Hvse-Ofv and the mouth of Little River, including Sehoy Weatherford, Alexander McGillivray, William Weatherford, David Tate, and more.

This area was sacred ground and part of their origin story. It clearly goes back to the Bottle Creek cultural area about 800 years ago, but the connection goes even deeper in time. Archaeologists have identified sites from 13,000 years ago in this region. These descendants were entrusted to have stewardship over this southwest corner of Creek Nation. They lived firmly on the Creek side of that border after 1802, north of Holly Creek.

Much of the land between the Alabama River, Little River, Escambia/Conecuh, and Perdido systems formed part of a working cultural landscape. Creek families had long participated in the deerskin trade, which required hunters to move through broad hunting territories rather than remain close to permanent settlements. Deer, timber, waterways, grazing land, and other natural resources tied communities to large areas of country. Cattle became increasingly important to Creek economies after the steep decline of deer populations from the deerskin trade. Families maintained herds that ranged widely across unfenced lands.

...continued on next page



PICTURED Ward Coachman from 1875, who went on to become a prominent leader in Oklahoma. As Principal Chief of the Muscogee Nation, he worked to reunify the Nation after the Civil War, strengthen its constitutional government, and expand education for both Indian and Freedman children. Coachman also strongly defended the citizenship rights of Creek Freedmen established by the Treaty of 1866. His administration oversaw construction of the Creek Council House in Okmulgee, OK, which is now a museum.

This is important to understanding the later movement toward modern-day Poarch. The interior was not simply a refuge discovered after Creek families were evicted along the Alabama River. They had already traveled through and used these lands for generations. When political and economic pressure made older river settlements increasingly difficult to hold, these familiar interior lands offered places where people could continue living within their homeland.

After the Creek War of 1813-1814, the political geography of our ancestors' lives changed dramatically. The Treaty of Fort Jackson forced the Creek Nation to give up more than twenty million acres. Creek families who had lived along the Alabama River suddenly found themselves inside territory claimed by the United States. This included Redstick warriors, people who had opposed the Redsticks, as well as neutral families whose relatives had died at Fort Mims. Certain "friendly" Creek warriors were told they could retain individual reservations, but holding those lands would be extremely difficult for many of them. Settlers moved rapidly into the newly opened territory. Creek families faced violence and pressure to abandon their homes.

Lynn and Semoice McGhee experienced that struggle near Choctaw Bluff. The brothers claimed land along the Alabama River, but Semoice reported that new settlers forced him away and damaged his crops. The United States eventually sold the land, though the brothers fought back through petitions. Their Alabama River property was lost, but the McGhee family did not leave the homeland. Instead, their story became part of a broader movement toward lands farther inland.

In an 1832 letter, Lynn and Semoice acknowledged their own deep ancestral memory of both their land taken near Choctaw Bluff and their newer residences near modern

Poarch, away from the Alabama River: "That they are now and long have been inhabitants of that space of territory ceded by the Creek Nation of Indians to the United States by a Treaty at Fort Jackson. That they are now inhabitants of the County of Monroe, and Baldwin in the neighborhood of their former places which they occupied previous to the Indian War."

There was never one simple migration away from the river. Part of the story was land allotments/grant land being taken as settlers moved into ceded Creek territory. An even larger factor was major timber companies pushing our people, often illegally, as they started to clearcut virgin longleaf timber further inland over time. But our Creek people remained rooted in the region as best they could, working, hunting, tending cattle.

Others saw more opportunity out west in Indian Territory, and some even travelled between Alabama and Indian Territory for a long time. Sizemore Landing near Choctaw Bluff became one important point in that network. Elizabeth Weatherford and Sam Moniac's daughter, Levitia "Vicey" Moniac, operated a ferry service there with her husband, William Sizemore of Atasi. The landing stood close to Hvse-Ofv and near the burial place of Vicey's grandmother, Sehoy Weatherford.

Ward Coachman returned to Alabama from Indian Territory in 1848 to locate relatives who had remained in Alabama and encourage some to move west. He found Creek people scattered across the region. Some wanted to emigrate but lacked the money or transportation to do so. Others chose to remain. Ward saw cases where landowners made Creek people unable to leave as they used them for labor.

Marion Tarvin, another Sehoy descendant, later remembered Coachman assisting the final group preparing to leave Alabama: "Ex-chief Ward Coachman, in carrying the last body of 65 Creeks from Alabama to the Nation in 1849. I was present and saw them get on board a steamboat at Sizemoore's wood-yard."

Sizemore's wood-yard/landing, known today as Eureka Landing, was operated within Ward's own extended family network, close to the graves of his relatives and the area he identified as the origin point of his people. When Ward helped relatives and friends board the steamboat bound west, he was also saying goodbye to close family members who chose to remain.

Other relatives continued moving in both directions. Ward's uncle Lachlan Durant emigrated west with him and other family members, while others remained in Alabama. Richard McGhee, Susan Marlow Moniac, and Sam Moniac Jr. also appear to have gone west and later returned. Relatives continued visiting and communicating across the distance. Indian Territory and Alabama were separated politically, but family relationships continued to connect them.

Susan Marlow, like Lynn, eventually lost her original lands, which were located near Hal's Lake on the Alabama River in Clarke County, not far from Choctaw Bluff. As squatters and prospectors moved into the Hal's lake area, these new strangers noted the sight of our people living off the land and wearing traditional clothing. Between the years of 1835 and 1840, visitor Emily Semple recalled seeing these families:

"Nowhere are the streams and watercourses more beautiful than in Old Clarke County, Alabama, and strange to say several Indian families lingered on their banks fishing and hunting for a living, as peacefully as the Whites. On one of our fishing excursions, we saw some of the men around in their beaded costumes 'spearing' the fish where the water was [so] clear that schools of them could be seen near the surface."

By 1850, the U.S. Government seemed to be encouraging many of these Creeks to move to Indian Territory, according to documentation which specifically named individuals who received Alabama claims being instead offered land in Arkansas Territory (modern-day Oklahoma). And sure enough, these individuals are missing on the 1850 census in Poarch region, with their names and close kinfolk appearing in early Oklahoma records.

However, this move didn't last long for everyone involved. Sam and Susan had returned on the Huxford census by 1860 and were ultimately buried in Huxford Indian Cemetery. Richard McGhee had returned as well, and would go on to inherit his father, Lynn McGhee's, claim at Headapadea, named for being right at the headwaters of Perdido Creek.

By the middle of the 1800s the geography of the Creek community in southwest Alabama was shifting more and more inland away from the Alabama River. For the ancestors of today's Poarch Band, Little River provides a useful geographic center for understanding where most of our ancestors ended up. Although it should be mentioned that some of our ancestors did move into the modern Poarch area coming from the other direction, where they lived by the Escambia River.

...continued on next page

PICTURED Sizemore Ferry and Landing, known today as Eureka Landing




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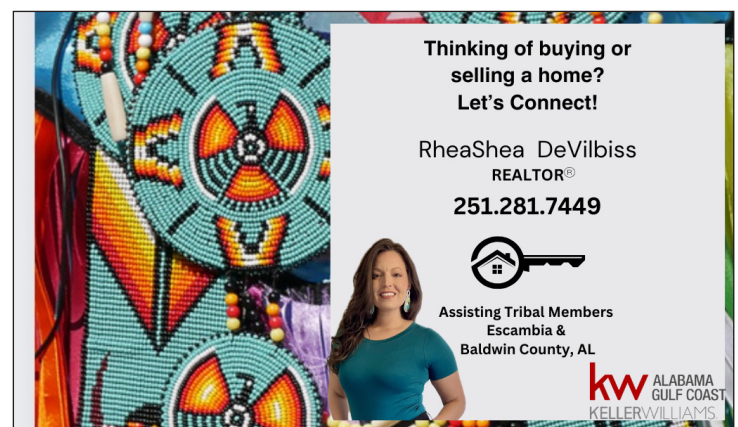



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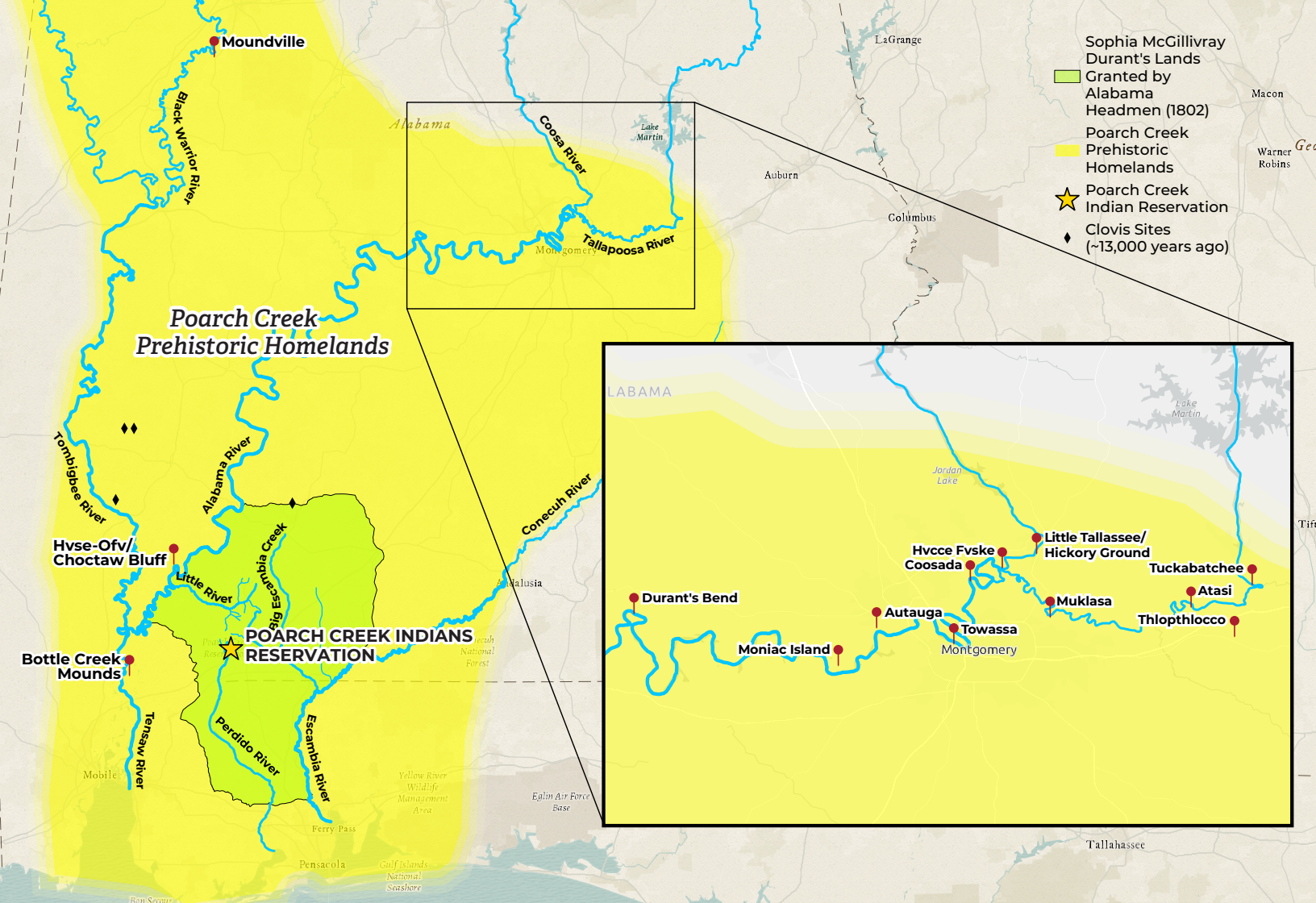
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Assisting Tribal Members
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kW ALABAMA GULF COAST
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Let's follow Little River upstream from its mouth at the Alabama River. About 8 miles upstream, look north to find Mineola. There is still a Weatherford Cemetery and Moniac Cemetery in this area. A little further north, between Mineola and the big bend of the Alabama River above Hvse-Ofv/ Choctaw Bluff, you'll find Eliska/Mount Pleasant, located right by sites previously discussed such as Semoice and Lynn McGhee's original land claim and Sizemore Ferry/Eureka Landing. Eliska and Mineola (which are both indigenous language names) held many Creek families that slowly migrated eastward.

Keep moving up Little River to the east (or take the upland path along Semirah Springs Rd) and you'll end up in the various headwaters of Little River. Just north is Jeddo/ Poplar Springs, and south is Huxford/Red Hill. Both had thriving Creek communities, which were also connected together by an upland path seen across today's Jeddo Road and Butler Street.

Looking at federal census records allows us to watch this migration unfold over time. In 1850, researchers identified twenty-four households associated with Poarch families, containing 152 people. Lynn McGhee's children and

several families later associated with Escambia County were clustered around what would become Huxford. Other related families formed clusters around Jeddo and farther north in Monroe County, while other Baldwin County families were concentrated around Montgomery Hill (near Holly Creek). The census data shows a network of related communities spread across the region.

By 1860, Huxford had grown considerably, with multiple families sometimes living on the same parcels. Monroe County households had become more concentrated around Jeddo and Eliska/Mount Pleasant, east of Jeddo. Meanwhile, the Montgomery Hill community had become smaller as a number of families moved north into Monroe County.

The 1870 census, the first census after the Civil War, shows that the population had grown little since 1860, because of disease and lives lost during the war. Many war widows appear in the census. Older widows often maintained their own households, while younger widows were more likely to live with parents or siblings. At the same time, Poarch families were more concentrated together in small places than in earlier decades. The instability of war may have encouraged families to pool land, labor, and resources.

Most importantly for the development of modern Poarch, 1870 is the first census year showing residences in what would become the Headapadea community, named for being at the Head of Perdido. The Perdido headwaters here flow down to Perdido (Cassaba/Kvsappv) River. Several Huxford families had moved southwest. Wesley Dewise, Peggy McGhee, who was Lynn McGhee's daughter, and Richard McGhee were all living on Lynn's land grant southwest of Huxford. Their presence provides a visible connection between the older Huxford cluster and the community that would eventually develop around Headapadea.

By 1880, the movement is even clearer. Huxford remained well populated, but Headapadea and Bell Creek were now developing as recognizable communities. The Gibsons owned land in the area and had moved south to Bell Creek. Settlement in southern Monroe County had expanded again, while some families recorded in Escambia County in 1870 had returned to Monroe County. The community remained mobile, but several enduring centers were becoming visible.

Maps and newspaper references sometimes called the vicinity around Headapadea "Taitsville" or "Tate's Grove," suggesting the continuing influence of David Tate and his network of relatives. Tate died in 1829, but his relationships extended into the next generation. His will left a very large number of cattle to Lynn McGhee, and Tate had testified for Lynn and Semoice when they fought to retain their Alabama River land.

When Lynn's son Richard McGhee and other relatives established themselves farther inland, they were therefore not walking into an unknown place disconnected from their past. They were moving into country already tied to family networks and long-standing land use. Over time, the area at the head of the Perdido River became known as Headapadea. Nearby were Hog Fork, Bell Creek, and Poarch Switch. These communities were close enough for families to remain connected but isolated enough that Creek people increasingly married within the same network of Indian families.

By 1900, the scale of that network had increased dramatically. Seventy-seven households containing 489 people were associated with Poarch families, compared with 308 people in 1880. Sixty-one percent of the people counted in 1900 had been born since the 1880 census. Households frequently included extended relatives. The census becomes difficult to understand because children sometimes lived with grandparents or other relatives, but that shows how different generations remained closely connected in Poarch Creek culture.

Looking across the censuses from 1850 through 1900, Huxford remains a center, while Jeddo and Montgomery Hill remain significant too. By 1870, Headapadea was taking shape to the southeast. By 1880, Huxford, Headapadea, and Bell Creek were all visible as important centers of Poarch family populations.

In the early and mid-1800s, Creek descendants remained spread across a wide area on both sides of Little

River. After the Civil War and into the Jim Crow era, racial discrimination placed growing pressure on Alabama Indians. Those who could pass into white society often did. Others who were identified as Indian were suppressed because of it. By the early 1900s, the strongest concentration of those strongly identified as Indian were east of Little River in Escambia County, which is where the modern Poarch Creek Indians comes from.

Weatherford relatives remained around Eliska, Mineola, and Jeddo. Tates, Stiggins, Sizemores, Shomos, Moniacs, and related families lived throughout the wider region too. Indian families also lived in Conecuh and Baldwin counties and within a few miles of Atmore. East of Little River headwaters, where Poarch Creek ancestors concentrated, were Moniacs, McGhees, Colberts, Rolins, Walkers, Gibsons, Steadams, Taylors, Dees, Hollingers, Dewises, Hathcocks, and many others. Poarch was therefore not the only place where Creek descendants survived, but it became the strongest center where interconnected Creek families continued marrying one another and maintaining a shared Indian community over generations.

The Tribe did not begin because a handful of unrelated Indian families happened to settle at Poarch. The community formed from an older network whose members had already been related to one another for generations. By the twentieth century, outsiders increasingly used one name for this broader community: Poarch. Even then, local Creek Indians did not always describe themselves as "Poarch Creek" until later. Anthropologist Frank Speck visited the community in 1941 and found people identifying with the smaller settlements where they actually lived, including Headapadea, Hog Fork, Bell Creek, and Poarch Switch. Government records preserve the same pattern. The 1920 census, for example, identified a "Bell Creek Indian Village."

Eventually, that network became centered around the small communities now collectively remembered as Poarch. In 1984, the United States formally recognized the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. By then, many Creek families had also branched outward for work in timber, railroad, and other industries, extending family networks toward Atmore, Flomaton, Canoe, Nokomis, Walnut Hill, Pensacola, Mobile, and other nearby communities. But all of them dispersed from families centrally located around Headapadea, Hog Fork, Bell Creek, and Poarch Switch.

Over generations, our ancestors passed their connection to this land on to their descendants. Our history has been flowing through this landscape since time immemorial, from the Upper Creek towns to the Alabama River, from the Alabama River into Little River, and from Little River inland to the place our people still call home.



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By Danielle Sanspree

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WHY WATCH?

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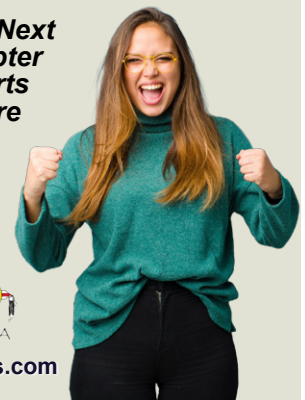
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The Tribe is committed to doing its part to further Native arts through books, media, movies, fashion, and similar artistic outlets.

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TOLOSE EN HOKTEN WAKVN SETENYOPOSKEMVTS SELECTED BY UNITED NATIONS

By Deidra Suwanee Dees, Ed.D.



Kids are the most important people you can write for. Writing for them, as future leaders, leads to understanding,” said award-winning author Dr. David Alexander Robertson to hundreds of worldwide delegates at the United Nations Congress. The Congress was held at Carleton University on the unceded land of the Anishinaabe Algonquin in present-day Ottawa, Canada on August 6-9, 2026.

In his keynote address, Dr. Robertson, a member of the Norway House Cree Nation of Manitoba, spoke on the essential issue, “Representation Matters.” He emphasized the importance of children’s books being written in Indigenous languages so that children can see themselves in publications. As the father of two Indigenous daughters, he said he is concerned about the way Indigenous girls and women are portrayed in some of the literature. In this political climate of banned books and erasure, he said it is important now more than ever for young readers to have access to Indigenous language books that demonstrate the authenticity of who they are in word and image.

Dr. Robertson underscored the UNESCO proclamation: “Ensuring that children have access to books, media and educational content in their mother tongues is essential.”

Tribal Council Treasurer Amy Gant and immediate past Director/Tribal Archivist Dr. Deidra Suwanee Dees attended Dr. Robertson’s powerful presentation and took pictures with him for our Tribal Archives. Author of more than thirty publications, he heads Swift Water Books which is an Indigenous-led imprint within the Tundra Book Group. He focuses his work on “providing a platform for Indigenous writers and illustrators to share their truths.”

Gantt and Dees were invited to attend the United Nations Congress for the presentation of the IBBY-UNESCO Collection of Remarkable Books for Young Readers in Indigenous and Endangered Languages. Tribal Council Secretary Roberta McGhee Sells’ (2002-2017) nonfiction book, *Singy the Cow / Tolose en Hokten Wakvn Setenyoposkemvts*, was selected for this exceptionally curated Collection from over 500 nominations that came from worldwide submissions. (IBBY stands for International Board on Books for Young People. UNESCO stands for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

Sells recorded her life history through a series of interviews with Dr. Dees when Dees was working on her Harvard dissertation. This charming story in Sells’ book emerged from those interviews.

Gantt said, “To see my granny’s book, Singy the Cow, selected by the United Nations is an extraordinary honor and one of the most meaningful moments of my life. She came from humble beginnings, and to see her story, written in our Mvskoke language, recognized on a global scale is deeply emotional for me and our family.”

“As her granddaughter and as the Tribal Council Treasurer of the Poarch Creek Indians,” Gantt said, “I feel an overwhelming sense of pride knowing that her voice, our language, and our culture will be preserved and shared with people around the world.”

Sells’ book contains vibrant illustrations by our Boys & Girls Club which gave students the esteemed opportunity to become published artists at an early age. The bilingual book was printed in the Mvskoke and English languages in 2022. Linguist Marcus Briggs-Cloud translated the Mvskoke from English. The book was published in partnership with Bluewater Publications and was distributed to Tribal heads of households.

Henehv Douglas “Poncho” Kelley’s copy was submitted to the United Nations for judging last year. “I gave up my book,” Henehv said. “I was proud to give it to the United Nations. I was proud that Indians could get a good word out. It lets people know about our language. If they can’t read our language, they can read the pictures.”

“I am proud of Aunt Bert telling her story to my wife [Dees]—a true story from her childhood. It ain’t no made-up story; no tv Indians,” said Henehv. “People should write their childhood stories about growing up.”

“We were all low on education back then,” he said. “My grandmother and grandfather on both sides couldn’t read. Mama [Lillie Mae Colbert 1932-1993] had to quit school in fifth grade to take care of her mama who was bedridden.” Despite the low level of education—Sells having only a seventh grade education due to poverty and discrimination—her book is now on the international stage as a model for other Indigenous writers to follow. “Her book lets people know we are still here,” added Henehv.

Gantt and Dees informed other delegates that they could access Sells’ book digitally on the Tribal website. Norwegian delegate Beate Heide expressed her sentiments with respect to the Tribe when she learned of this accessibility. “You are so generous! You did not keep the book only for yourselves. You gave it to the world!”

Sells’ book is featured in the official IBBY-UNESCO catalogue that showcases the books that were chosen for the Collection. Gantt and Dees brought home a copy of the catalogue for the Office of Archives and Records Management in order to locally preserve the catalogue, as well as to share the catalogue with the Tribal community.

In 2026-2027, this Collection is traveling the world at international book fairs and touring exhibitions. The world tour includes Canada, the United States, Germany, Italy, Spain, and France. The Collection will be housed at the United Nations Library in Paris, France as a permanent installation.

“UNESCO has consistently highlighted the importance of ensuring that all languages, and particularly those at most risk, are supported in both digital and physical spaces. Today, this commitment is reflected in the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032), proclaimed by the United Nations Global Assembly, as a global call to action to preserve, revitalize and celebrate Indigenous languages as living expressions of culture, knowledge systems and worldviews.”

Research by UNESCO revealed that “Many Indigenous peoples still share common experiences of minoritization and language endangerment, racism and discrimination, as well as social and economic marginalization.” This research draws attention to the importance of preserving Indigenous and endangered languages to prevent further marginalization and erasure.

UNESCO “classifies languages along a continuum based on the number of speakers, ranging from ‘Out of use’ [gone extinct since 1950] to critically ‘Endangered/Unsafe.’” The Mvskoke language falls under the critically endangered classification with less than 25,000 speakers today.

Gantt and Dees interacted with a number of book publishers who support Indigenous languages at the United Nations Congress. Dr. Dees is in discussion with two of these publishers about translating and publishing Singy the Cow in the Mandarin language, the official language of the People’s Republic of China. This

would give Chinese children the opportunity to read Sells’ one-of-a-kind story.

“This moment is bigger than one book,” Gantt stressed. “It is a reminder that the stories of our elders have value, that our language carries our identity, and that preserving those stories and our culture is essential to preserving who we are as Indigenous people. My granny’s legacy will now reach far beyond our community. Her words will inspire worldwide generations who come after us.” **MVTO**

— “ —
*As her
granddaughter
...I feel an
overwhelming
sense of pride
knowing that
her voice, our
language, and
our culture will
be preserved and
shared with people
around the world.*

**AMY GANTT,
PCI TRIBAL
COUNCIL
TREASURER**



*Read “Singy the Cow”
by scanning the QR code.*

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Peer-Led Addiction & Mental Health Support Group

Group Overview

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For More Information

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Phone: 251-294-3258

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“ By honoring our past, we strengthen our future and continue preserving the rich history and culture of the Poarch Creek Indians.

HONORING OUR HISTORY COMMEMORATING THE BATTLE OF BURNT CORN

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

The Historical Marker presentation commemorating the Battle of Burnt Corn was a meaningful reminder of the importance of preserving and sharing our rich history.

A sincere thank you to the dedicated representatives from our Regulatory Division, including the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO), Tribal Archives, and Tribal Museum, for their efforts in educating our community and ensuring these important stories continue to be told.

A special thank you to Billy Bailey for sharing the historical significance of the Battle of Burnt Corn and helping us better understand why this event remains an important part of our Tribal history and heritage. Preserving and sharing our history strengthens our connection to our ancestors and ensures future generations understand the journey that has shaped who we are today.

Thank you to all of the Tribal Citizens who came out and participated despite the hot weather. It was especially meaningful to have several of our Tribal Elders in attendance, whose presence reminds us of the importance of passing our history from one generation to the next.

Finally, a huge thank you to three of our Tribal Princesses for attending and representing our Tribe with such pride and grace. Your participation helped make this event even more special.

By honoring our past, we strengthen our future and continue preserving the rich history and culture of the Poarch Creek Indians.

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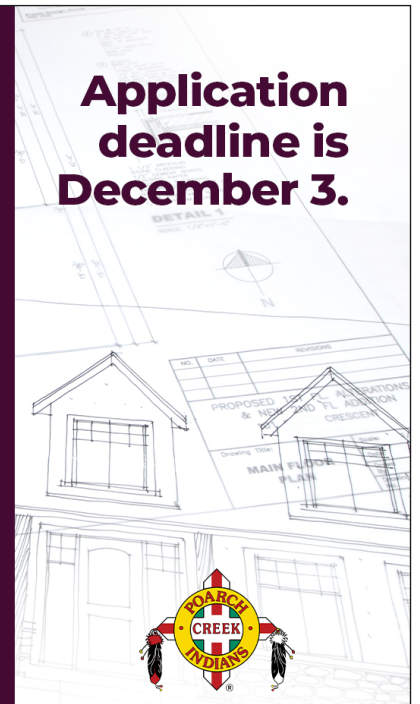
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**Application
deadline is
December 3.**



HOUSING DEPARTMENT



THPO DEPARTMENT ATTENDS THLOPTHLOCCO TRIBAL TOWN BRIDGE COMMEMORATION

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

“Gatherings such as this allow Tribal Nations to come together, honor shared history, and recognize the importance of preserving places tied to our ancestors.”

The Poarch Creek Indians Tribal Historic Preservation Office, represented by THPO Billy Bailey and Clayton Coon, was honored to attend a recent bridge commemoration near Shorter in Macon County, Alabama. The bridge is located on Thlopthlocco Branch and was recognized in connection with Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, which is in Okemah, Oklahoma.

We were pleased to share this meaningful occasion with Mr. David Frank, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, along with Tribal Town Council members Tanya Walker and Tracey Johnson. Their presence helped make the commemoration an important opportunity to recognize the history and continued connection of Thlopthlocco Tribal Town to this area.

Gatherings such as this allow Tribal Nations to come together, honor shared history, and recognize the importance of preserving places tied to our ancestors. They also provide an opportunity to strengthen communication and build lasting relationships between Tribal communities.

The Poarch Creek Indians THPO Department is working diligently to build and maintain positive relationships with other tribes. Through cooperation, communication, and mutual respect, we can better support one another and continue protecting the history, cultural resources, and heritage of our people for future generations.



ENVIRONMENTAL DEPT



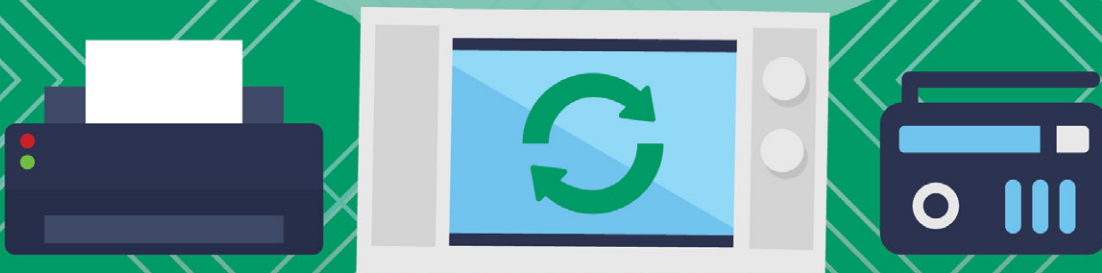
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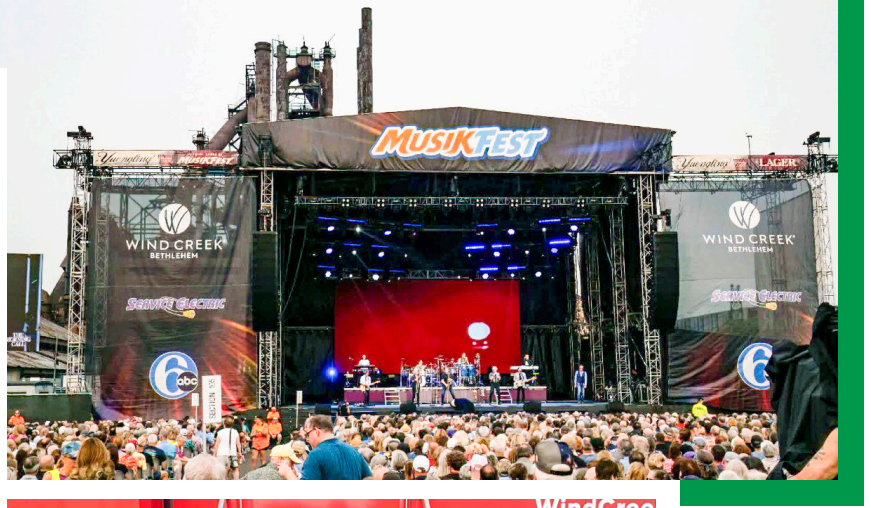
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WIND CREEK CELEBRATES COMMUNITY AND MUSIC AT MUSIKFEST 2026

By Amelia Tognoli

Wind Creek was proud to sponsor Musikfest 2026, one of the nation's largest non-gated music festivals and a signature celebration of music, food, and community in Bethlehem, PA. This year's festival welcomed more than 1.26 million attendees, making it the third most-attended Musikfest in its 43-year history. Festival-goers enjoyed hundreds of performances across 16 stages, including the Wind Creek Steel Stage.

"Musikfest is a tremendous celebration for Bethlehem and the entire Lehigh Valley, and Wind Creek is proud to be part of it. It's exciting to see our community come together and welcome visitors from near and far while showcasing everything that makes this area such a special place to visit," said Patrick Ryan, Executive Vice President and General Manager at Wind Creek Bethlehem.

Throughout the festival, the Wind Creek team welcomed music lovers to the hospitality area and Gaming Trailer, where Guests could take a break from the festivities, play games, spin the prize wheel, pick up Wind Creek swag, and learn more about everything Wind Creek has to offer.

"Musikfest was an incredible experience and a great opportunity to connect with so many music lovers while showcasing the spirit of Wind Creek. Our team had a wonderful time being part of the energy, excitement, and community that make Musikfest so special," said Trina Rackard, Wind Creek Hospitality's Director of Sponsorship and Events.

From great music and food to memorable connections with festival-goers, Musikfest was another great opportunity for Wind Creek to support the community while creating fun and engaging Guest experiences.

"Musikfest is a tremendous celebration for Bethlehem and the entire Lehigh Valley, and Wind Creek is proud to be part of it."

**PATRICK RYAN,
EXECUTIVE VICE
PRESIDENT AND
GENERAL MANAGER AT
WIND CREEK BETHLEHEM**



FUN-FILLED FALL IS HERE AT OWA

October is packed with thrills, chills & unforgettable memories!

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez



Whether you're looking for family-friendly fun or spooktacular adventures, OWA Parks & Resort has something for everyone this fall! This October, Downtown OWA transforms into a festive fall destination filled with seasonal experiences, thrilling rides, live entertainment, and plenty of opportunities to make unforgettable memories. Gather your friends and family and come enjoy a day of Halloween excitement or stay for the weekend. There's always something happening at OWA! Check out these festive events this month!

HALLOWEEN AT OWA

CREATURE COME ALIVE ZONES

October 1-31 | Daily | Downtown OWA

Downtown OWA comes alive with themed Creature Come Alive Zones, offering the perfect backdrop for festive fall photos. Explore spooky scenes and snap memorable photos at Zombie Lane, Witches Hollow, Skeleton Square, Ghost Blvd, Spider Lair, Mummy Court or Jack-O-Lantern Bridge. Gather the family, grab your camera, and explore them all!

PUMPKINS ON PARADE

October 1 - 31 | Daily | Downtown OWA

Pumpkins on Parade brings fall to life in Downtown OWA with a month-long pumpkin carving competition featuring local businesses and their creative, one-of-a-kind designs. Beginning October 1, guests can stroll through Downtown OWA, discover the imaginative displays, scan QR codes, and vote for their favorite creation as businesses compete to become OWA's first-ever Pumpkins on Parade Champion. It's a festive celebration of creativity, community, and friendly competition that's fun for everyone!

LITTLE CREATURE'S BALL

Friday, October 30 | 5-8 PM

Calling all little monsters, princesses, superheroes, and costumed creatures! Little ones can show off their Halloween spirit during Little Creature's Ball, with a children's costume contest by the splash pad, DJ entertainment from 5-8 PM, and a costume awards ceremony by the splash pad. Come dressed to impress and get ready for an evening of family-friendly Halloween fun!

WAG-O-WEEN

Saturday, October 31 | 11 AM-1 PM

Halloween isn't just for humans! Bring your four-legged friends to Downtown OWA for Wag-O-Ween and enjoy a pet costume contest, bobbing for pumpkins, DJ entertainment and an awards ceremony. Dress up your furry friend and make this Halloween one to remember!

CANDY CRAWL

Saturday, October 31 | 2-5 PM

Trick-or-treating gets an OWA-sized upgrade! Grab your Candy Crawl map and make your way through Downtown OWA as participating shops hand out tasty treats. Bring the whole family to join the fun!

PRIMAL FEAR*

October 2-3, 9-10, 16-17 & 22-31

Get ready to face your fears this Halloween as you step into Primal Fear, OWA's most terrifying immersive attraction, where your deepest fears become your reality! For those who like their Halloween a little spookier, Primal Fear delivers a psychological journey designed to awaken humanity's most instinctive fears. Navigate a maze filled with claustrophobic passageways, unsettling distortions, and the chilling sensation that you're being watched or hunted. Every room is designed to make you question what's waiting around the next corner. Do you dare enter? (*Ticket required for this event.)



TROPIC FALLS AT OWA

The fun doesn't stop when summer ends! Tropic Falls at OWA is keeping the adventure going on weekends throughout October, making it the perfect destination for a quick getaway. Continue to enjoy the region's largest indoor water park with towering water slides, a relaxing lazy river beneath the convertible glass roof, and a surf-inspired wave pool, as well as Tropic Falls Theme Park, where 23 exciting rides and classic midway games keep the thrills going all day long. Whether you're planning a splash-filled getaway or a weekend packed with family adventures, Tropic Falls is ready to make your October unforgettable!

OWA THEATER

Make your fall getaway even more memorable with an exciting lineup of live performances at the OWA Theater. On October 2nd get ready to laugh as OWA Comedy Nights Presents Andrew Conn. October 3rd experience the music and energy of Garth Brooks with the Ultimate Garth Brooks Tribute featuring Shawn Gerhard. Don't miss Shower The People - The Music of James Taylor and Carole King on October 16th and enjoy an evening celebrating the timeless music of two legendary singer-songwriters. And on October 19th, experience the soulful sounds of singer-songwriter Devin Gillfillian.

Make October an OWA Getaway and make the most of every weekend. From thrilling rides and water-filled adventures to live entertainment, family-friendly festivities, spooky experiences, and plenty of opportunities to make memories, there's always something new to discover. Gather your family and friends, plan your fall getaway, and keep the good times rolling all month long!

For more information and a complete listing of events checkout visitowa.com

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➤ DID YOU KNOW? ➤

The Tribe has a Tribal Grievance Board!



What is the Tribal Grievance Board?

The Tribal Grievance Board (TGB) is a group of elected Tribal Citizens who review and make final decisions on appeals. These appeals occur when a Tribal Citizen or employee has been denied a benefit or service and has already gone through all appeal steps within the responsible department.

HOW IS THE TGB STRUCTURED?



Falls under the
Regulatory Division



Members must apply
and are selected by
the **Tribal Council**



Serve **three-year** terms



Includes:
• **7 Members**
• **2 Alternatives**

Leadership Roles Include:
Chair • Vice-Chair • Secretary

WHEN CAN YOU APPEAL TO THE TGB?



After receiving a
denial letter



After completing
all required
departmental
appeals within the
allowed timeframe



When the TGB
has **jurisdiction**
over the matter

IMPORTANT TO KNOW



Most Tribal
departments have
a **grievance process**
you must **follow first**.



TGB decisions are
based strictly on
department **policies**
and **procedures**.



Unless otherwise
noted, all TGB
decisions are **final**.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Visit **www.pci-nsn.gov** to find:

- Forms
- Resources
- History of the Tribal Grievance Board

1

Go to
Government



2

Select
Regulatory Affairs



3

Scroll to
Tribal Grievance Board



Know Your Rights. Understand the Process.
Use the Resources Available to You.

COLUMBUS AND CLANS

PIECES OF OUR PAST

By Aya Prince

W

elcome to October, friends (and an early happy Halloween)! So many exciting things happen this month; it's hard to pick just a few to write about. Most importantly, I hope you and your family are doing well as we move forward through 2026. Only a few months left in the year! It will be the holiday season before you know it. I, for one, am always amazed at how time flies.

A couple announcements and shoutouts within our community first, though—the Teen Christmas Party (for First Gen and Tribal youth from ages 13-18) will take place on December 3rd from 6-10 P.M. Registration for the event closes on October 30th, so be sure to check your schedules and sign up if you can. It's a fantastic way to get to know other youth and enjoy a fun evening. The Boys and Girls Club Fall Festival is also taking place this month on October 22nd. Children within the Tribal community are welcome to come (and wear costumes if they wish).

Our historical spotlight for October isn't actually that far in the past. That's right—we're spotlighting Indigenous Peoples' Day, originally proposed in 1977 and not officially celebrated under the name until 1992. South Dakota was the first state to celebrate it in 1990 as "Native American Day." This holiday came about during the time of the Red Power movement in the U.S., designed for indigenous people to bring to light the injustices done to their ancestors throughout history. Furthermore, Indigenous Peoples' Day is an alternative holiday to Columbus Day. Christopher Columbus, while credited with discovering the Western Hemisphere, employed violent tactics against the indigenous tribes he encountered. Additionally, the arrival of Europeans to the Americas brought diseases like smallpox that would wipe out 90% of the Native American population. As such, many tribes (and some states) choose to celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day instead of Columbus Day. We celebrate it on the second Monday of October—this year, that's October 12th. So, now you know the story behind the name! Happy Indigenous Peoples' Day.

The Word of the Month is...

HOTVLKE : WIND CLAN

This word in Mvskoke describes the ancient social structure of the Creek people. Essentially, tribes were split further into clans to help decide your role in society. Your clan was determined by your mother's, since Creek lineage was matriarchal. Bear Clan, Wolf Clan, and Wind Clan are just a few examples of the different clans throughout the tribes. Wind Clan was the highest ranking clan; often, chiefs and leaders would come from Wind Clan. It was another form of connection within the tribe.

I hope you have a wonderful October; Halloween and Indigenous Peoples' Day should make for a great month. Take care, and I'll see you next month to talk about something even more exciting: the 54th Annual Thanksgiving Pow Wow! Until next time.

I wish you all the best of luck in your upcoming endeavors. Find your support networks if you need them; they will be there for you. For those of you who are sports fans, enjoy the return of many major leagues. For those of you who are not, consider a 'social stickball game' or two. What can you do to build that same happiness? Think about it. Until next time.



AYA PRINCE

Poarch Creek Indians Tribal Citizen
and Creek Corner Columnist

CONGRATULATIONS KAYSEN MCGHEE

Submitted by Jeremy and Angel McGhee

Kaysen McGhee, son of Jeremy and Angel McGhee and representing the PCI archery team, recently competed at the BHA State Championship in Talladega AL. Kaysen shot 25 targets on a trail range where he finished the day with his personal best score. He was awarded the state championship title, as well as being honored as Shooter of the Year for his numerous 1st place finishes throughout the season at multiple events. Kaysen would like to extend a special thank you to his coaches, Phenix Crews and Dakota Knowles for always going above and beyond for him, as well as Jacob Rackard who has volunteered his help, guidance, and expertise throughout the season. He would also like to express special gratitude for his pawpaw Ronnie, who he says always comes through for him no matter what. Above all else, his constant remains that he is most thankful God allows him to do the things he loves.

LASTLY, A SIDE NOTE FROM MOM AND DAD:

*"We are very proud of you, son!
Your hard work, dedication, and
determination are just a few qualities
we love most about you!
Keep being great, Booga, and
remember we're your biggest fans! "*





THE POARCH CREEK INDIANS
ANNOUNCES
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NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Persons interested in receiving more information should contact Genia Boutwell (517 Martin Road, Atmore, AL 36502) at telephone number 251-368-9136 Ext 2242.



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CREEK CORNER

OCTOBER 2026 IMPORTANT DATES

10.1	SUBMISSION DEADLINE November Issue	
10.1	TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers	4:00 PM
10.2	FAMILY COURT Tribal Courtroom	9:30 AM - 4:00 PM
10.6	TRIBAL COURT Tribal Courtroom	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
10.6	POETRY READING, STOMP DANCE, AND DINNER Old Fred L. McGhee Building	6:00 PM
10.12	TRIBAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES CLOSED Indigenous Peoples' Day	
10.15	TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers	4:00 PM
10.16	FAMILY COURT Tribal Courtroom	9:30 AM - 4:00 PM
10.20	TRIBAL COURT Tribal Courtroom	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
10.26	MUSEUM GIFT SHOP CLOSED Inventory	

OUR MISSION

Creek Corner is a monthly magazine produced by the Internal Communications Team of the Poarch Creek Indians. Our mission is to celebrate our community by sharing stories of culture, people, and achievements, while also providing meaningful updates for Tribal Citizens.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for Creek Corner may be edited or declined at the discretion of the editorial team. Content is finalized one month prior to publication. The deadline for submissions is the first Monday of the month before the issue date.