



OCTOBER
2025

No. 46

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the POARCH CREEK INDIANS

creek corner

Sovereignty and the Land

**POARCH 101: THE FORGOTTEN CREEKS,
A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

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to Thriving
Community Center:
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Transform Madison
Community Center**

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MEGAN ZAMORA
Editor, Creek Corner

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

“



ately, I've been thinking about the weight of words. In an era when almost everything can be recorded, replayed, and amplified in seconds, what we say doesn't just disappear. Words can steady us—or shatter us. They can open doors—or harden hearts. As communicators, parents, coworkers, and neighbors, we carry a responsibility to speak in ways that build up our community, even when we disagree.

October gives us a few timely reminders. It's **Domestic Violence Awareness Month**, calling our attention to people who are carrying private battles behind public smiles. It's **National Family History Month**, inviting us to sit down with our elders, gather stories, and remember who we come from. And on **Indigenous Peoples' Day**, celebrated in many states and communities, we honor the resilience and wisdom passed down through generations—truths that have survived precisely because someone chose words of courage, teaching, and care.

These observances point to a simple practice: choose words that lighten someone's load. That's been my personal lesson this month, too. With a new administrative assistant on our Internal Communications team, I've been reminded that accepting help is not a weakness—it's a form of wisdom. Asking for support changes the words we use with ourselves (“I have to carry this alone”) into something healthier (“We can carry this together”). And when our self-talk softens, our speech to others usually follows.

If you're feeling stretched thin, here's my gentle nudge:

- **Pause before posting.** Ask: Will these words heal, clarify, or inflame?
- **Lead with listening.** Most of us are fighting battles that aren't obvious.
- **Name what's good.** Recognition—offered plainly and sincerely—can change a day.
- **Reach out.** If you need help, say so. If you can help, offer.

Scripture captures this posture beautifully: *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily entangles, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”* — **Hebrews 12:1** (NKJV)

“Laying aside every weight” can look like setting down harsh words, cynicism, or the habit of assuming the worst. It can look like making that call, checking on a friend, or choosing silence when silence is kinder. It can also mean telling the truth with love—because honest, careful words are part of how families, teams, and nations heal.

And, when I read about that “great cloud of witnesses,” I can't help but think of our ancestors—the ones who endured so much so that we could stand here today. I often ask myself if the way I speak, write, and live would make them proud and if my life honors the sacrifices so many before me have made.

As we move through October, may our speech reflect the best of who we are as Poarch: people who honor our ancestors by how we treat one another today. May our words be bridges, not blades. And may those who are carrying heavy things find that—because of what we say and do—the load feels a little lighter.



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.

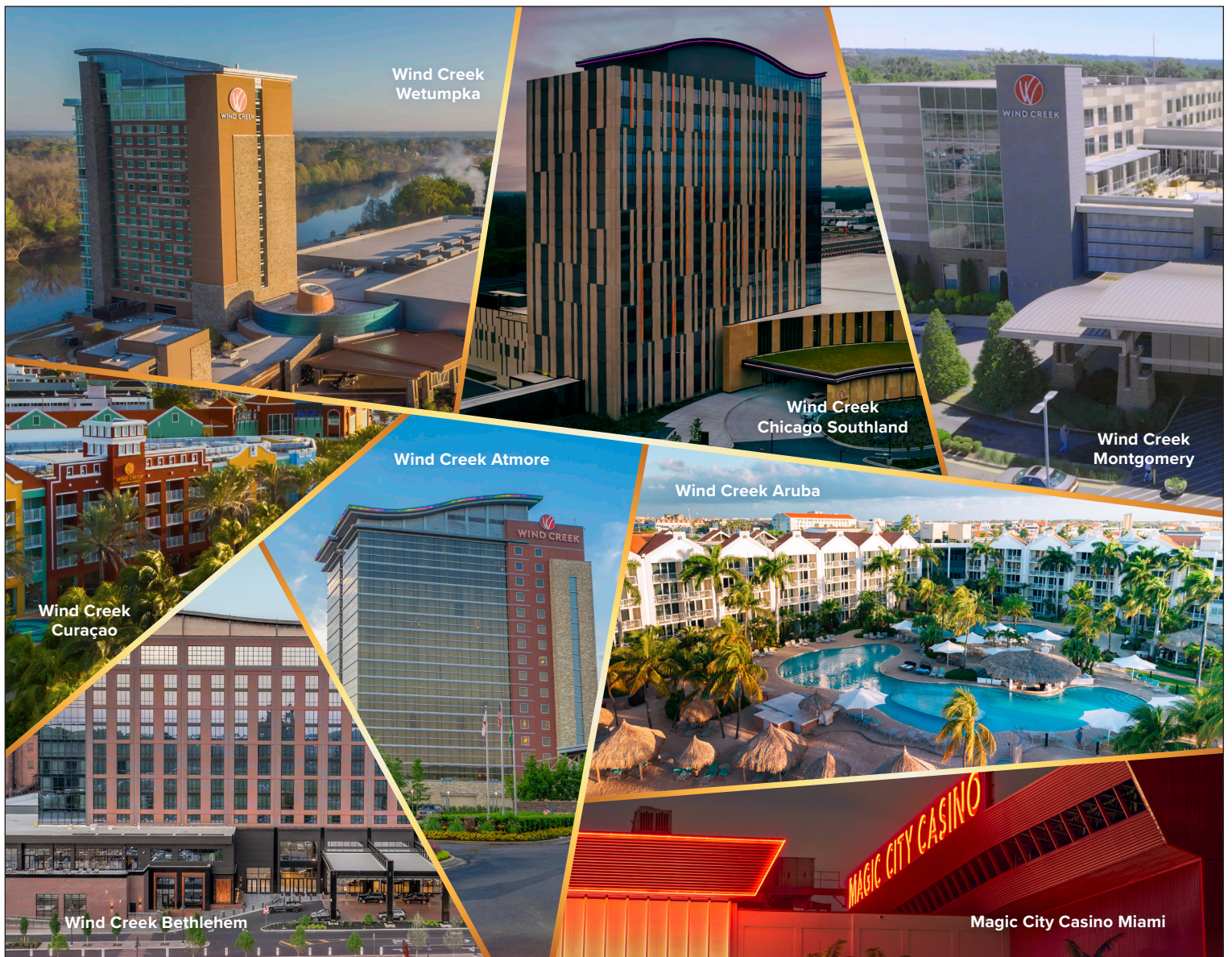
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LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

CHRISTINA FLINT-LOWE

Honoring a Journey of Service and Commitment

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

Growing up outside the Poarch Creek Reservation in Fort Myers, Florida, Christina Flint-Lowe was raised by parents who embodied the values of hard work, independence, and family unity. Her family provided the foundation for a life guided by personal responsibility, compassion, and perseverance. That same foundation would become the bedrock of a life dedicated to service—first in healthcare, then in the federal government, and now in Tribal leadership.

With over 22 years of experience in the healthcare field and 15 years dedicated to serving Veterans through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), her journey into Tribal Government has felt like a natural progression of a lifetime spent in public service.

After earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from the University of Florida in 2003, she quickly advanced her studies, becoming a board-certified Family Nurse Practitioner by 2007. She went on to complete a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in 2014 and later earned a Master's in Native American Leadership in 2020 from Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

From her early days as a floor nurse to becoming a team lead in geriatrics at the VHA, her career has been marked by leadership, resilience, and innovation. A proud moment came in 2024 when she was selected as the keynote speaker at the National Association of VA Hematology/Oncology conference in Atlanta—an honor that symbolized the culmination of decades of dedication.

Today, she serves as an At-Large Member on the Tribal Council, where she's already actively engaging by serving on the Utilities Board, Health Legislative Committee, and Community Services Committee. Elected to this role in June 2025, her leadership style is hands-on and team-oriented.

She believes in doing the hard work, fixing broken systems, and ensuring we're always moving the mission forward. Guided by the principles of servant leadership, she remains focused on putting the needs of others first.

Her recent role as the 2023–2024 Poarch Creek Senior Adult Princess helped deepen her connection to the community and cultural traditions of the Tribe. Today, she remains actively involved in cultural offerings and educational programs through the Tribal Museum and Cultural Department.

As she begins this new chapter on Tribal Council, she is eager to learn, collaborate, and serve. "I look forward to meeting with Tribal Government divisions, understanding the current challenges, and working with our experts to become a strong and effective voice for our people," said Flint-Lowe.

Her leadership journey is one of purpose, perseverance, and deep-rooted love for her community—a testament to what's possible when service meets calling. This vision for the future is rooted in a balance between economic prosperity and cultural preservation. She envisions a decade of continued success powered by economic innovation, while simultaneously fostering the cultural endurance of the Tribe for generations to come.

"My long-term goal is to help craft a 10-year plan that builds on our previous achievements, supports economic stability, and uplifts the health and success of our Tribal Citizens."

To aspiring leaders, she offers sincere wisdom: "Pursue leadership for the right reasons. It requires a servant mindset, sacrifice, and doing work that may never be publicly recognized. But know that your presence, your voice, and your efforts matter—and you've been placed in that position for a reason."



DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT:

MAGNOLIA BRANCH WILDLIFE RESERVE

By Sharon Delmar

Nestled across 600 acres of pristine natural beauty, Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve (MBWR) has been a treasured part of our community since opening its gates to the public on May 1, 2006.

This remarkable facility is more than just a place to camp or fish—it's a hub for outdoor recreation, education, and conservation, proudly managed by a dedicated team committed to serving visitors and protecting the environment.

Magnolia Branch offers **92 campsites**, accommodating a wide range of camping styles. Guests can choose from **47 full hook-up RV sites**, **20 water/electric-only sites**, and **25 improved primitive tent sites** with water and electric access. Future plans include adding 10 new pull-through RV sites and introducing cabins, expanding options for visitors seeking a comfortable and memorable stay.

In addition to camping, MBWR provides facilities for group events and special occasions, including **four pavilions** available for rent and a **10-stall stable** for equestrian enthusiasts. Amenities such as three restroom facilities and a laundry room ensure guests have a pleasant and convenient experience.

Recreation is at the heart of MBWR's offerings. Guests can enjoy fishing in multiple lakes, scenic walking trails for birdwatching, and tubing on Big Escambia Creek from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The reserve also offers **canoe and kayak rentals** for exploring 6.5 miles of the creek or paddling on the lakes, as well as **bicycle rentals** and several access points to the creek.

Education and conservation play a key role at Magnolia Branch. The team regularly hosts educational programs for groups and partners with Gulf Coast RC&D to bring fourth graders to the reserve for hands-on environmental learning. Looking ahead, MBWR plans to launch the Creek Explorers Program in 2026, inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards.

Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve is a shining example of how our departments work together to preserve natural resources, educate the community, and create unforgettable outdoor experiences.



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Stephanie Bryan



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

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POARCH 101:

The Forgotten Creeks

A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Submitted By Billy Bailey, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

The Poarch community has at times been described as “The Forgotten Creeks,” a phrase later taken up as the title of the PBS documentary that drew public attention to our Nation. However, the notion of being “forgotten” is complicated. We were never forgotten by our neighbors, nor within our own families. What was absent was acknowledgment from outside governments, which created many of the struggles we later faced in being recognized.

Our Creek ancestors of Alabama were never forgotten by the locals who were around us. We were distinctly visible in this Southwestern Alabama region, where Creek families remained close-knit and intermarried within our own communities. This strong kinship network helped preserve our identity as Creek people well into the twentieth century.

When the term “forgotten” is applied to the Poarch community, it does not reflect local recognition, but rather the long absence of acknowledgment by the federal, state, and local governments. This neglect created the circumstances that made federal recognition in 1984 such a demanding process, requiring extensive documentation. The roots of this governmental disregard, however, extend much deeper into earlier periods of our history.

EARLY ANTHROPOLOGISTS

In the 1970s, an anthropologist named J. Anthony Paredes from Florida State University came to visit us. Before his work, very little outside research had been done on our people during the twentieth century. He saw firsthand that we were a large, close-knit group who had long been known locally as Indians, even if the government ignored us. Paredes himself later wrote:

“Despite the relatively large size of the group and their firmly established local reputation as Indians, very little research has been done up to now on these eastern Creeks. Frank Speck (1947) visited the group for a few days in 1941 and published a brief report...They are one of the few eastern remnant groups with an undisputed tribal pedigree.”

Frank Speck noticed that they were not originally called ‘Poarch,’ but lived near a small settlement by that name. Back then, they more often identified themselves by the names of smaller communities: Hog Fork, Headapadea, Bell Creek, and Poarch Switch. These names showed up in records too, like the 1920 census listing for ‘Bell Creek Indian Village.’

Speck also made mistakes. He assumed we mainly descended from the Lower Creeks of the Chattahoochee River region, but in truth our families hold deep ties to the Alabama (Alibamo) people and the Upper Creek towns. Our seasonal movements carried us through the Tensaw Delta, along the Alabama River, and up to the Coosa-Tallapoosa confluence. These were not random migrations but part of our established use of the land: hunting, fishing, and living within a homeland to which we were entitled. Through these movements we affirmed our rights to this region, and over time our people blended with the broader Creek Confederacy, carrying both Alabama and Mvskoke identities.

Speck also suggested that we descended from Choctaw lineage, but this was likely a misinterpretation. A stronger case exists for Chickasaw connections, as many of our descendants can be traced through the Colbert family bloodlines, which over time became part of our broader Creek identity.

Speck admitted that we strongly identified as Creek, even though he heard little of our language during his visit. Years later, Paredes recorded our elders still using certain words and expressions in a distinct dialect of the Mvskoke tongue. He also noted their memories of how fluency had been common among their parents and grandparents. Even as everyday use declined over the years, the language remained with us, carried forward in the remembered words and phrases passed down by our elders.

“
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”

LYNN MCGHEE AND THE LAND GRANT TRADITION

Speck writes: "Tradition in the band maintains that the grant was made in favor of a Creek Indian named Lynn McGhee allegedly in compensation for services in the Creek War (1812-1814) rendered by him and his band of friendly Creeks... which were granted a tract of 200 acres by General Andrew Jackson about 1815."

The story of Lynn McGhee shows how our families were swept up in the aftermath of the Creek War and the Treaty of Fort Jackson (1814), which forced the Creek Nation to give up more than 20 million acres of land. At least 6 million of those acres were the very homelands where our families had long lived, hunted, fished, and harvested. The treaty promised that Creeks who had shown loyalty to the United States could be compensated with land, and it was under this provision that Lynn's long struggle to secure a claim began.

Many Creek leaders participated in the signing of the Treaty of Fort Jackson, ceding vast ancestral lands, yet not a single Poarch Creek ancestor placed their name on it. Our ancestors (such as William Weatherford, Ol' Sam Moniac, Alexander Dixon Moniac, David Tate, Lauchlin Durant, Malcolm McPherson or Opay Micco) all were prominent figures of the era, known and remembered on both sides of the struggle: the Redsticks who resisted and the National Council Creeks who sought accommodation with the United States.

Some "Friendly Creeks" secured their allotments quickly, such as Tallassee Fixico of the Hickory Ground, who signed Jackson's Treaty of Fort Jackson in 1814 and had his land secured by 1820. Meanwhile, Lynn's claim dragged on for more than thirty years. In 1823, he testified that before the war he had cultivated fields on the east side of the Alabama River, and that his brother Semoye had managed them after the war until white settlers forced them out. The disputed tract lay near Eliska, by Eureka Landing and Choctaw Bluff, a place rich with mound sites and ancestral memory.

Lynn and Semoye argued that their families had lived there for generations. In 1832, they declared in a letter 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... in the neighborhood of their former places which they occupied previous to the Indian War." Our oral traditions of migration along the Alabama River reinforce how deeply tied this land was to our people. Yet even with such testimony, questions lingered about Lynn's standing as a "Friendly Creek" and the true extent of his service.

...continued on next page

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PICTURED
 Above Photo postcard found among Frank G. Speck's research at the American Philosophical Society. Likely taken in the 1930's by Rev. Edgar Van W. Edwards. Back of the postcard reads "Indian Family near Atmore, Ala"
 Right Hattie Mae McGhee, Ernestine Daughtry (McGhee), Francis McGhee, Leola Manac. Photographed by Frank Speck.



Lynn is remembered as one of the "Friendly Creeks," yet this role has often been overstated, as the evidence of his assistance to Andrew Jackson is limited. In an 1831 affidavit, Lynn testified that he had aided U.S. forces during the war. The only act of service clearly tied to him comes from oral history, which recalls Lynn piloting Jackson from the Montgomery area down to Spanish Fort in 1814, and then making his way back into the woods afterward. He also claimed to serve under Colonel Russell to defend his land claim, which, if true, might have placed him at the Battle of Holy Ground, though no records confirm this or any other military service. He had close ties with Ol' Man Sam Moniac, who at times scouted for U.S. forces but also misled them at the Holy Ground while his own family stood with the Redsticks. This suggests that Lynn, too, lived within the same divided loyalties that fractured so many Creek households.

Despite his testimony, Lynn was never allowed to reclaim his original fields. When he tried, he was threatened off the land by John Gayle, a white settler who later became governor of Alabama. Even after the Alabama legislature petitioned Congress on his behalf in 1832, the case stalled. Lynn and Semoice kept protesting that they had never "relinquished, nor abandoned their places," but their voices meant little against the advance of settlers.

In 1836-1837, Congress finally ratified bills granting each brother 640 acres under the Treaty of Fort Jackson, though not on their river homelands. Senate Bill 118 authorized Lynn to select non-contiguous acreage, but the parcels were never clearly defined, sadly leaving him unable to return to his ancestral home on the Alabama River.

With no way back to his old home, Lynn turned to a respected Creek leader of the region, David Tate, the eldest son of Sehoy Weatherford, who offered him a place in Tatesville. There, Lynn established himself among the longleaf pines and bog savannahs, land well suited for cattle grazing. When Lynn passed, he was laid to rest nearby, less than an eighth of a mile from the land tract later settled by his son Richard. In 1853, Richard at last managed to finalize the outstanding land claim with the government, securing lands at Headapadea and Huxford into trust. The closeness of Lynn's resting place to this land ties our family's story of survival directly to that settlement.

Lynn's struggles were not unique. Even one well-known relative fought a long, unsuccessful battle to reclaim land. Lachlan Durant, son of Sophia Durant and nephew to Sehoy Weatherford, spent more than a decade trying to recover his family's property east of the Alabama River at the mouth of the Little River. He proved that his mother, Sophia McGillivray Durant, inherited the tract from Alabama and Creek headmen.

Although his legal right was eventually recognized, Thomas Boyles and his heirs blocked him from regaining possession for years. Together, Lynn and Lachlan's stories reveal the chaos left in the wake of the war and its impact on Creek people whose homelands had been ceded to the United States. It was a constant struggle against displacement, encroachment, and the enduring shadow of Andrew Jackson. Unlike prominent leaders, Lynn endured as a worker: cattleman, post rider, ferry operator, and interpreter, roles that anchored our family's survival in a world that was rapidly changing.

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PICTURED Hattie Mae McGhee,
Photographed by Frank Speck



*Though the land we held
grew smaller, we remained
Creek, bound by a shared way
of life that held us together.
...we carried forward a fragile
but enduring thread of
connection to our way of life.*

ISOLATION AND CONTINUITY

Speck writes: "No contacts with other Indian groups in the Southeast are remembered to have been continued after the establishment of the land grant for the Escambia County Creeks. The band has been isolated from contact with its tribal relatives in Indian Territory and Oklahoma, and the Seminole of the Florida peninsula. The Choctaw of Mississippi are likewise outside their range of contacts."

By the time Speck visited in 1941, the Poarch Creek community was indeed geographically and socially isolated from many other Native groups in the Southeast. The memory of the Removal remained, as our elders recalled their parents and grandparents being afraid of being taken away to "Indian Territory" whenever strangers appeared. The fear of removal shaped our ancestors' lives even into the early 1900s.

Some of our ancestors went west to inspect the lands offered in the Arkansas Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). For example, Lynn's son, Richard, left Alabama around 1860 but returned to Headapadea, where he rejoined his sister, Peggy, and her husband, William Adams. Lynn's brother Semoice, along with Susan Marlow Moniac and her husband Sam Moniac Jr., had land in Clarke County, but by 1850 they also lost it when the government pushed the offer of Arkansas Indian Territory instead. Susan and Sam appear in Indian Territory records, yet they also came home and were buried at Red Hill, now known as Huxford Indian Cemetery. Susan, like Lynn, had lost her original lands, which were located near Hal's Lake on the Alabama River, 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 still living from the land's natural resources. Between the years of 1835 and 1840, visitor Emily Semple recalled: "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."

Over time, we were driven from these homelands along the Alabama River near Eureka Landing, Eliska, Jeddo, Mineola, and Red Hill. As pressure from squatters increased, our families moved farther south and southeast into familiar lands that would later become Escambia County, where we established new communities such as Bell Creek, Hog Fork, Poarch Switch, and Headapadea.

Though the land we held grew smaller, we remained Creek, bound by a shared way of life that held us together. The memories and records of our past show that we were never willingly cut off from other Creek people or from the larger story of our nation. Instead, we carried forward a fragile but enduring thread of connection to our way of life. Far from being "forgotten," we continued to tell our story. Through displacement, removal pressures, and the loss of land, we held fast to who we are, by passing down traditions, strengthening kinship ties, and keeping the memory of our ancestors alive. Today, we live out that legacy in Alabama, honoring the strength of those who came before us.



Sovereignty and the Land

CONTINUING THE STORY

By Sharon Delmar

This article is a follow-up to “We Are the Land: A Living Narrative of Tribal Sovereignty,” which appeared in the September 2025 issue of Creek Corner magazine. In that piece, we reflected on the deep connection between sovereignty, history, and land—an unbroken story of resilience. Now, just one month later, we return to the conversation to explore what has changed, and what challenges remain, in the ongoing fight for tribal sovereignty and land-into-trust.

When we last left off in October 2023, the voices of Megan Zamora, Lori Stinson, and Venus McGhee Prince carried us through a difficult truth: the fight for tribal sovereignty, especially through land-into-trust, was far from over. *Carcieri v. Salazar* still sat heavy on tribes across the country, forcing them to prove—again and again—that they deserved what should never have been questioned in the first place.

But the story didn't stop there. Since that conversation, new steps have been taken—some small, some promising—and together, they show how tribes, allies, and advocates continue to push forward. In December, the Bureau of Indian Affairs announced a new rule to speed up the land-into-trust process. For the first time, they set a 120-day deadline for applications and created presumptions of approval when land sits on or next to a reservation, or when a tribe is applying for trust land for the first time. The Interior Secretary also reaffirmed a commitment to strengthen tribal welfare through land-into-trust decisions. It was a meaningful promise, though *Carcieri* still looms large in the background.

Meanwhile, lawmakers in Washington have been pressed to act on what many call the “*Carcieri* fix.” H.R. 4147 and S. 1750 affirm the applicability of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA of 1934 to the Poarch Creek Indians’ protecting every trust land action already taken. The bill also ensures the Tribe can apply to take land into trust in the future.

Across Indian Country, voices have only grown louder. Scholars and advocates point out how *Carcieri* has stalled housing projects,



*For the Poarch Creek Indians, and for all tribes,
land is not just paperwork—it is home, belonging,
and the promise of future generations.*

slowed economic opportunities, and delayed community revitalization. Tribal coalitions have organized petitions and rallied support, with more than 100 tribes standing together to demand action. The message is clear: sovereignty cannot be conditional, and it cannot be tied to arbitrary dates in the past.

For the Poarch Creek Indians, the issue goes even deeper. As Robert McGhee, Vice Chairman and Chief of Government Relations and Public Affairs, explains:

“The federal government recognizes our tribal status, providing a basis for self-governance and access to many resources through trust responsibilities and consultation processes. This allows us to manage programs and protect our cultural and land interests.”

Yet recognition is not the same as partnership. McGhee points out that consultation with federal agencies can be shallow or inconsistent, too often relying on symbolic “listening sessions” rather than meaningful government-to-government dialogue.

“Too often the government relies on ‘listening sessions’ that undermine our constitutional rights as sovereign nations and fail to honor the government-to-government relationship.”

That tension—between recognition and respect, promises and practice—lies at the heart of the struggle. As McGhee notes, the Poarch Creek Indians’ success has

grown from federal recognition and sound governance, but challenges remain: uneven enforcement of treaty rights, political shifts that threaten stability, and bureaucratic hurdles that limit autonomy. The answer, he says, is to keep building the foundations for a strong future: strengthening legal advocacy, forging alliances, staying politically engaged, and raising awareness of both tribal rights and the Tribe’s economic impact in Alabama.

For the Poarch Creek Indians, and for all tribes, land is not just paperwork—it is home, belonging, and the promise of future generations. The new Interior rule is a step forward, but only Congress can erase the barriers that Carcieri created. And as the article on Sovereignty reminded us, sovereignty isn’t won in a single courtroom or chamber of Congress. It lives in the voices of citizens, in civic action, in stories shared, and in relationships built with those who make decisions.

So where does the story go from here? It goes with us—by keeping watch on these bills, by mobilizing allies, and by celebrating every success that proves progress is possible. The fight for sovereignty and the land is still unfolding. The article on Sovereignty was just one chapter. These changes are another. And the ending—the moment when all tribes stand equally protected—has yet to be written.



HEARING LOSS MYTHS VS. FACTS

Myth: “Hearing loss only affects older people.”

Fact: Hearing loss can impact people of all ages, including newborns, children, teens and adults. It can be caused by noise exposure, infections, genetics and medications, in addition to aging.

Myth: “If I had hearing loss, I’d know it.”

Fact: Hearing loss often develops gradually. Many people don’t realize they have it until someone points it out or they struggle to communicate in noisy places.

Myth: “Hearing loss isn’t a big deal.”

Fact: Untreated hearing loss can contribute to physical, mental and emotional conditions, such as social isolation, depression and falls. Fortunately, wearing hearing aids may help lower the risk of developing these issues and improve quality of life.

Myth: “Hearing aids are bulky and noticeable.”

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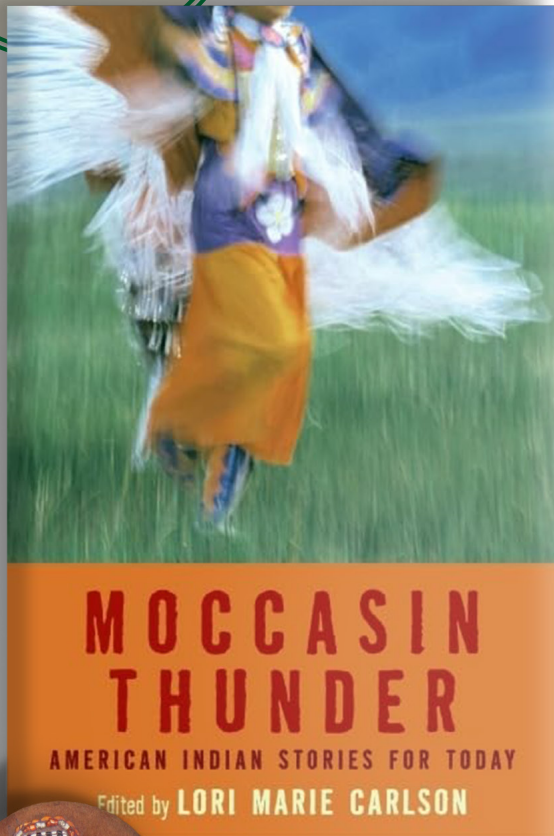
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MOCCASIN THUNDER

AMERICAN INDIAN STORIES FOR TODAY

EDITED BY LORI MARIE CARLSON

By Sharon Delmar

If you're looking for a read that's as meaningful as it is engaging, *Moccasin Thunder: American Indian Stories for Today* is a book you won't want to miss. Edited by Lori Marie Carlson, this anthology brings together ten contemporary Native American writers, each sharing a story that reflects the challenges and triumphs of Indigenous life in today's world.

The settings feel familiar—grocery store lines, high school dances, frozen lakes—but the voices you'll encounter are anything but ordinary. These stories explore love, family, cultural identity, and resilience with honesty and heart.

You'll laugh at the wit of Cynthia Leitch Smith's tale of young romance and stereotypes, feel moved by Joy Harjo's lyrical story of escape and survival, and reflect deeply on Joseph Bruchac's haunting meditation on memory and loss. Each piece offers a glimpse into lives where heritage and modern life meet—and sometimes clash—in unforgettable ways.

Moccasin Thunder is perfect for teens and adults alike, especially those looking to broaden their perspectives and discover authentic, diverse voices. It's a reminder that Native stories aren't just part of the past; they're alive, evolving, and incredibly relevant today.

The Tribe is committed to doing its part to further Native arts through books, media, movies, fashion, and similar artistic outlets. We'd love to include your recommendation in one of our future issues.

Share your recommendation
with Sharon Delmar at sdelmar@pci-nsn.gov.





JOIN US FOR A FUN-FILLED FALL AT OWA PARKS & RESORT

By Catherine Hasty

Whether you're looking for family-friendly adventures or spine-tingling thrills, OWA is the place to be this fall! Don't miss out—mark your calendars, grab your costumes, and join the fun as we celebrate the season in all your favorite ways.

Oktoberfest | October 4

Prost to good times! Kick off the season with our German-inspired Oktoberfest celebration! From authentic bites and fun games to steins of seasonal brews, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Don your lederhosen and let the festivities begin!

Halloween at OWA | October weekends (Sat & Sun, 10/11-10/23) & Friday 10/31

Spooky, sweet, and everything in between! Our October weekends are packed with frightful fun and family thrills. Whether you're brave enough for haunted happenings or just want a pumpkin-perfect time, Halloween at OWA has your October covered.

Howl-O-Ween | October 11

Calling all costumed canines! Trick-or-treating is going to the dogs—literally! Bring your furry friends for a tail-waggin' good time with treats, doggy costumes, and more pet-friendly fun.

HalGLOWeen | October 18

Light up your night at HalGLOWeen! With glowing décor, bright costumes, and an electric atmosphere, this is one dazzling event you don't want to miss. And at 8:30 p.m., there will be a special Halloween-themed drone show featuring spooky characters and classic Halloween imagery, all set to music. The show will take place over the island, creating a magical experience you won't want to miss.

American Heart Association Heart Walk | October 25

Walk for a cause. Walk for your heart. Join us as we support the American Heart Association with a day of fun, fitness, and community spirit. It's a feel-good event—literally!

Monster Bash | October 25

Time to get creepy-cute (or just plain creepy!) It's costume contest time! Dress to impress (or distress!) at this thrilling Monster Bash. Prizes, dancing, and devilish fun await.



Trick or Treating | October 25, 26 & 31

No traffic, just treats! Safe, pedestrian-only trick-or-treating makes Downtown OWA the perfect place for costumed kids and candy collectors of all ages.

This October, continue to enjoy all the thrills and chills at Tropic Falls theme and water parks on Saturdays and Sundays opening at 10 a.m. Stroll the streets of Downtown OWA and visit your favorite entertainment and dining spots, including the newly opened Bikini Blini Bakery - the sweetest new spot in Downtown OWA.

Be sure to check out the great new lineup of live music and entertainment coming to the **OWA Theater** this fall, including *Cash Back: A Johnny and June Carter Cash Tribute* on October 2nd, and on October 4th, *Roman Street LIVE* will perform. Continue to enjoy the fun with a great line-up of Halloween 4-D scary movies and live performances sure to put you in the Halloween spirit! (Tickets \$10)

- **October 5** Night of the Living Dead (1968)
- **October 12** Carrie (1976)
- **October 19** Freddy vs. Jason (2003)

The Halloween frights continue as we celebrate the **50th Anniversary of the Rocky Horror Picture Show** with the award-winning Rocky Horror Picture Show Shadow Cast with the Mystic Society of Rocky Horror. Join the fun as a "shadow cast" acts out the movie's scenes on stage, mimicking the characters and actions of the actors on the screen behind them. You won't want to miss this interactive, audience participation-driven fun. There will also be games and a costume contest with prizes, as well as a bag of show props available for sale in the lobby before the show. Showtimes are October 18, 25 & November 1st 8:00PM.

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

Attention Indigenous Creators!

Call For Digital Photo Submissions

StrongHearts Native Helpline is seeking submissions of digital photos representing American Indian and Alaska Native people and culture.



STRONGHEARTS
Native Helpline

We invite Indigenous Creators to delve into Indigenous storytelling through photos!

These photos will be used to develop media materials including advertising, PowerPoint presentations, brochures, and posters to promote StrongHearts Native Helpline and the relatives we serve.

Submission Criteria

Compensation is based on content and quality as described below.

- Photos must honor Native American and Alaska Native people and culture.
- Quality should include a resolution of 300 dots per inch (DPI) or 300 pixels per inch (PPI).

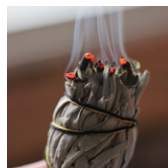
Selections will be made at the end of each month. Compensation will be processed during the following month.

Note: Payees must provide a social security number or tax identification number issued in the United States.

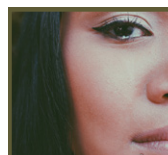
Indigenous Story Telling Themes: Native-centered, Trauma Informed and Empowerment Based Advocacy.



Indigenous (everyday life) means authentic traditional and contemporary Native Americans at home.



Indigenous Places (scenic) means places where Indigenous people live or visit whether it's a traditional home or Pipe Stone National Monument. Photos can include animals significant to indigenous culture.



Indigenous Healing (cultural practices) represents a cultural event that is a known healing practice such as burning of tobacco or sage, or activities harvesting natural food sources.

Domestic, Dating and Sexual violence such as emotional, physical, sexual, financial, digital and cultural abuse; activism and/or protest against social or racial injustice.

Earn up to \$250 for each digital photo selected! Submit your photos via email to submissions@strongheartshelpline.org

This project was supported by Grant No. 15JOVW-23-GG-02829-CSSP awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.



FROM DETENTION HALL TO THRIVING COMMUNITY CENTER

Poarch Creek Indians Support Helps Transform Madison Community Center

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez



What was once a juvenile detention facility in Madison, Alabama, is now a vibrant hub of connection and care—thanks in part to the support of the Poarch Creek Indians. The Tribe’s \$250,000 investment helped breathe new life into the building, transforming it into a place where all generations can thrive.

The Madison Community Center officially opened its doors in December 2024 and now stands as a beacon of opportunity and wellness for both seniors and youth in Madison and neighboring Huntsville.

Inside the 30,000-square-foot facility, residents now find spaces filled with joy, learning, and belonging. From music rooms and arts and crafts studios to a multi-use gym designed to serve all individuals, the center was built to bring people together. At its heart lies a welcoming courtyard with picnic tables and a small outdoor stage—an open invitation for community events, performances, and togetherness.

BEFORE



AFTER



CREATING A PLACE FOR ALL GENERATIONS

One of the center's most meaningful impacts is its ability to serve multiple generations under one roof. The Madison Senior Center now occupies an entire wing of the Community Center building, a much-needed expansion that has significantly increased the number of programs and activities available to the city's growing senior population. From wellness classes and social clubs to educational workshops, the center gives seniors a place to thrive.

At the same time, youth in the community now have access to spaces where they can explore music, express themselves creatively, and play—all in a safe environment. These programs are overseen by the Madison Parks and Recreation Department and are accessible through the city's app which can be downloaded on the App Store or Google Play store, making participation easy and affordable.

A FUNCTIONAL NECESSITY AND A SYMBOL OF GROWTH

Mayor Paul Finley called the Madison Valley Community Center "a functional necessity for residents and community groups," underscoring its role in keeping pace with Madison's rapid growth and development.

"This center is about more than bricks and mortar," said Mayor Finley. "It's about giving people a place to come together—whether they're playing, learning, or just enjoying a sense of belonging."

PCI'S ROLE IN BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY

The Poarch Creek Indians' contribution specifically helped bring the expanded Senior Center to life—providing vital funding that enriched programs and strengthened outreach to older residents.

"We're honored to support a space that fosters health, connection, and lifelong engagement," said Tribal Chair and CEO Stephanie Bryan. "This partnership reflects our commitment to uplifting communities through meaningful investment and continued collaboration."

Christina Hearne, Executive Director of Madison Vision Partners (MVP), said PCI's support has already made a tangible difference: "The Poarch Creek Indians helped us strengthen our social infrastructure and realize a vibrant, connected, and healthy future for Madison."

MORE THAN A BUILDING—A NEW BEGINNING

The story of the Madison Valley Community Center is one of resilience and vision—where the past has been reshaped into a brighter future. And thanks to PCI's investment, the new center is not just a facility—it's a place where community happens, every single day.

BEFORE



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POARCH CREEK INDIANS CELEBRATE GRADUATES OF ALABAMA LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

The Poarch Creek Indians proudly recognizes Jessica Black, Marketing Director for PCI Federal and first generation Poarch Creek descendant, along with Cody Williamson, President/CEO of Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority and a Poarch Creek Tribal Citizen, for successfully completing leadership programs through Leadership Alabama. This prestigious organization provides leaders with exposure to the state's issues, helps develop a network of relationships, and offers a structure for this network to seek a mutual understanding of problems and priorities for Alabama's future.

Jessica Black recently graduated in April from the Alabama Leadership Initiative (ALI), a program under the Leadership Alabama umbrella designed for emerging leaders and early-career professionals who demonstrate strong leadership potential and a commitment to their communities.

Cody Williamson recently graduated in May from Leadership Alabama, a highly selective, multi-month program that brings together established and executive leaders from various sectors to explore critical issues facing the state of Alabama.

"These programs are powerful tools for collaboration and growth," said Tribal Chair and CEO Stephanie A. Bryan. "We're incredibly proud of Jessica and Cody for representing Poarch in these statewide leadership forums. Their participation not

only strengthens their individual growth but also reinforces our Tribe's commitment to public service and progress."

"Leadership Alabama is represented by the state's most accomplished and forward-thinking leaders who share a strong commitment to serving the people of Alabama. By assembling such a committed and accomplished group of leaders each year, the state is sure to benefit from their collective passion, knowledge, and influence," said Ashley Kaplan, Leadership Alabama's executive director.

Kaplan added, "The ALI program led by Lydia Barnett exposes young professionals to decision-makers in Alabama who are sensitive to the challenges we face as a state, and it provides the participants with the unique opportunity to step inside the circle of decision-makers and problem solvers who mold the future of our state."

The Alabama Leadership Initiative and Leadership Alabama offer participants a chance to engage in dialogue around pressing challenges, connect with decision-makers, and develop strategies to make a meaningful

difference across Alabama. Both programs require significant time and dedication, including travel and in-depth sessions over the course of several months.

"These accomplishments speak volumes about who we are as a Tribe," Chairwoman Bryan added. "We invest in our people, and they, in turn, invest back into their communities."

— “ —
These accomplishments speak volumes about who we are as a Tribe. We invest in our people, and they, in turn, invest back into their communities.

**STEPHANIE A. BRYAN,
PCI TRIBAL CHAIR & CEO**



HEALTH DEPARTMENT CELEBRATES FIRST LEADERSHIP GRADUATES

By Megan Zamora

On August 15, the Buford L. Rolin Health Clinic marked a milestone with the graduation of its first Leadership Development Institute class. Sixteen employees completed a six-month program designed to prepare high-performing staff for the challenges and responsibilities of leadership.

The initiative, created in partnership with leadership coach Eli Pagonis of The Power of E4, builds on a cultural enhancement effort that began in 2024. That first year, every department participated in sessions designed to strengthen morale, improve communication, and deepen connections with patients and coworkers. With that foundation in place, the 2025 program shifted focus toward leadership development—offering emerging leaders practical skills in accountability, conflict resolution, coaching, and succession planning.

Division Director of Health and Human Services, Kelly Dirting, shared that the program was designed for staff who were already demonstrating leadership qualities:

“Healthcare is different. It’s hard, patient-facing work, and these are people who were already carrying themselves like leaders. This program gave them the meat and potatoes of leadership—the skills to have hard conversations, to inspire their teams, and to grow in confidence.”

For many participants, the training was both challenging and rewarding. Pagonis recalled asking each person at the

very start a simple but powerful question: Do you want to do this? That commitment laid the groundwork for interactive sessions that included role-playing, group projects, and opportunities to practice crucial conversations. By the end, he noted, even the most reserved participants were speaking up with confidence.

The graduation ceremony featured remarks from Dr. George Semple, the Health Department’s new Chief Medical Officer and a retired Marine and Navy physician. Drawing from his military experience, Dr. Semple highlighted leadership lessons from figures such as General John A. Lejeune, who believed a leader must be both a teacher and a scholar, and General George S. Patton, who emphasized courage, action, and leading by example.

“Good leaders encourage their teams to act with integrity, even when it’s not the most popular choice,” Dr. Semple reminded the graduates. “A good plan carried out with vigor today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow. Get up, get out, and get moving.”

Dr. Semple also recognized the servant leadership already on display within the Health Department, pointing to leaders like Chief Pharmacist Selina Chee, who models teamwork by stepping into day-to-day operations with her staff, and Director of Nursing Haley Rolin, who balances administrative responsibilities with direct patient care.



As the first class of graduates moves forward, the program is already paving the way for the future. The Leadership Development Institute is designed as a cycle—six-month leadership cohorts complemented by year-long cultural enhancement training—ensuring a steady pipeline of well-prepared leaders.

“These are the people who will lead this department for years to come,” said Dirting. “Investing in them means investing in the health and well-being of our entire community.”

Though the graduation took place in the heat of August, its impact carries into this fall and beyond. As we mark October’s focus on leadership and growth in Creek Corner, the story of our first Leadership Development graduates is a reminder that leadership is not about titles. It’s about courage, consistency, and care. At Poarch, the next generation of leaders is ready to rise.

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE ANNOUNCES FY2026 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS SIGNUP DEADLINE **OCTOBER 17TH, 2025**

Any tribal farmers, ranchers, or landowners that may need assistance with farming and land management practices need to have applications into the office of Perdido River Farms by October 17th to be considered for funding.

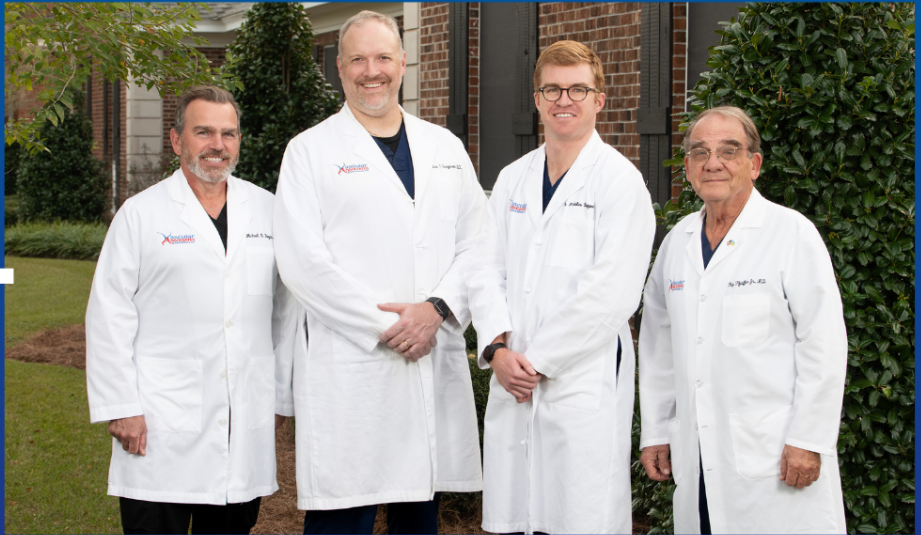
APPLICABLE PROGRAMS INCLUDE THE:

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program–Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE)
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program–Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- EQIP – Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership Program (EQIP-JCLRPP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

NRCS offers voluntary programs to eligible landowners and agricultural producers to provide financial and technical assistance to help manage natural resources in a sustainable manner. Through these programs the agency approves contracts to provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns or opportunities to help save energy, improve soil, water, plant, air, animal and related resources on agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest land.

For more information about Alabama NRCS and Programmatic initiatives, priorities and assessment/ranking criteria, visit online at www.al.nrcs.usda.gov. Additionally, visit your local USDA Service Center to determine eligibility; applicants are not eligible for USDA programs until they have ensured all Farm Bill eligibility requirements have been met. You can locate your local Service Center at farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

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WIND CREEK PARTNERS WITH MAKE-A-WISH ALABAMA FOR TELETHON

By Amelia Tognoli

Wind Creek proudly joined WKRG and Make-A-Wish Alabama for the 2025 Wishes Can't Wait Telethon, a powerful and heartfelt statewide campaign dedicated to granting life-changing wishes for children battling critical illnesses.

Wind Creek helped amplify the reach and impact of the telethon, which aired throughout WKRG's local newscasts. The event spotlighted heartfelt stories from local Wish Kids and their families, showcasing how each wish brings hope, joy, and strength during challenging times. Make-A-Wish Alabama grants up to 200 wishes annually, with each wish averaging \$10,000. Thanks to generous donations and community support, the telethon raised vital funds to help close the gap for the 266 children still waiting for their wishes to come true.

"Wind Creek Hospitality's generous sponsorship and hands-on support during our Wishes Can't Wait telethon with WKRG made a tremendous impact," said Tracy Bennett Smith, President & CEO, Make-A-Wish Alabama. "Their volunteers brought energy and compassion to every call they answered, helping us bring hope and joy to children across Alabama."

One of the most touching stories featured Ana Lois Mercer, a courageous 4-year-old from Perdido, AL who recently completed her leukemia treatment. Ana Lois originally wished for a horse, but her heart ultimately

settled on a Barbie-themed camper. Not a toy—but a full-sized, custom-built camper in her favorite shade of pink. With help from Bama RV in Dothan and the support of Poarch Creek Indians and Wind Creek Hospitality, Ana Lois' wish was revealed in a surprise celebration at Wind Creek Atmore during Make-A-Wish Alabama's "Partners in Wishes" reception last year. That same week, Ana Lois rang the bell to celebrate the end of her chemotherapy treatment.

"Volunteering at the telethon was a powerful reminder of how a single act of kindness can create a lasting impact. Witnessing our community unite to support these children was truly inspiring," said Tiffany Bryan, Sponsorship Supervisor at Wind Creek Hospitality.

Wind Creek's commitment to community support is rooted in our belief that our neighborhoods are like family. Through partnerships like this, we continue to uplift and invest in the well-being of those we serve. Wind Creek Team Members played a hands-on role during the telethon, volunteering to answer phones, take pledges, and share the message of hope.

"Their volunteers brought energy and compassion to every call they answered..."

**TRACY BENNETT SMITH
PRESIDENT & CEO, MAKE-A-WISH ALABAMA**



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STRENGTHENING CULTURAL BONDS:

A MEANINGFUL EXCHANGE BETWEEN MAḤPÍYA LÚTA AND POARCH CREEK YOUTH

From mahpiyaluta.org

Last month, Maḥpíya Lúta hosted an impactful cultural exchange with youth from the Poarch Creek Band of Indians in Alabama. From June 24th to 26th, our summer interns had the opportunity to connect with these young leaders, sharing stories, learning from one another, and deepening their understanding of the importance of cultural preservation.

Amanda Carlow, the director of the Lakota Language Othi, shared her thoughts on the significance of such exchanges: “I envision cultural exchange programs, like the one with Poarch Creek, as more than travel opportunities—they are powerful spaces to witness how language lives in other communities. They allow us to see the status of Indigenous languages elsewhere and learn what youth in those communities are doing to protect and promote them. These experiences inspire and empower our own youth to stay active, or to join, the language revitalization movement—doing their part to keep our language alive for this generation and for generations yet to come.”

Throughout the exchange, the Poarch Creek youth arrived on campus on June 25th to meet with Maḥpíya Lúta interns. The morning began with introductions in the High School Library, followed by a presentation on the role of language and social media in cultural preservation. The day continued with a visit to the Heritage Center and lunch, where both groups connected over shared meals and stories.

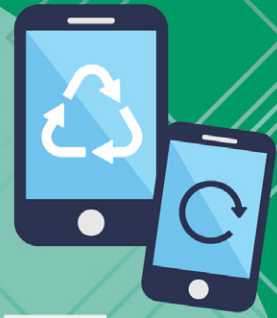
One of the most memorable moments of the exchange came during a fun TikTok session. Senior intern Kinley Fox reflected on the experience, saying, “The most memorable moment with the Poarch Creek youth was getting to know them by doing our individual TikToks. They were funny, outgoing, and kind to us and our language.” Fox continued, “Listening to them talk makes me realize that we both have a lot in common as far as our ability to take pride in our identity by rebuilding what we once lost. It makes me want to further participate in the ceremonies and language that we have, not just for this generation but the next generation to come. That way, we won’t ever have our culture stripped away from us again, as long as we continue to embrace our identity.”

The cultural exchange continued on June 26th, with the Poarch Creek youth making TikToks, going fishing, watching the horse races, and picking sage alongside Maḥpíya Lúta interns. The day wrapped up with a group reflection and left everyone with a renewed sense of cultural pride and a commitment to language revitalization.

This exchange highlighted the power of language in connecting communities across time and space, fostering not only a deeper appreciation for one’s own culture but also a shared commitment to keeping Indigenous languages alive. It was an unforgettable experience that will continue to inspire the youth of Maḥpíya Lúta as they take part in the ongoing movement to preserve and revitalize the Lakota language.



ENVIRONMENTAL DEPT



E-WASTE RECYCLING



BATTERIES and ELECTRONICS ONLY

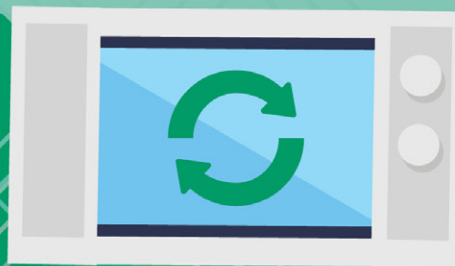
November 1



8am–Noon Fire Station 1 / 5971 Jack Springs Rd

ENTER BY MARTIN RD / EXIT ONTO JACK SPRINGS

Call Tiffany Lozada 251-368-9136 ext. 2683
or email tlozada@pci-nsn.gov
for more info.



ACCEPTING ALL ELECTRONICS
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PER VEHICLE



POARCH CREEK INDIANS HOST SECOND ANNUAL EMPLOYEE WELLNESS FAIR

By Sharon Delmar

T

he second annual Wellness Fair was a resounding success, bringing together employees, vendors, and a spirit of community and health-focused fun. This year's event saw increased participation and a variety of engaging activities that made it memorable for all.

Event Highlights:

PARTICIPATING VENDORS

This year's fair featured 29 vendors, each offering unique insights and services related to health, wellness, and lifestyle. From fitness consultations to nutritional advice, attendees had the opportunity to explore a wide range of wellness options. Each vendor contributed to the fair's vibrant atmosphere, providing valuable resources and information to help employees lead healthier lives.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

The fair attracted an impressive turnout, with nearly 350 employees participating in the day's activities. This level of engagement highlights the growing interest in wellness initiatives within the organization and reflects a collective commitment to fostering a healthier workplace environment.

FUN ACTIVITIES

One of the standout attractions was the dunking booth, which provided endless entertainment. Employees relished the opportunity to participate or watch as colleagues took the plunge for a good cause. This year, we had a fantastic lineup of participants ready to take the plunge. Here's a look at who made a splash: Jason Rackard, Jason Madden, Lukas Moye, Chris McGhee and Eddie Jackson. The dunking booth not only added a fun element to the fair but also emphasized the importance of incorporating play and enjoyment into wellness programs.

BENEFITS OPEN ENROLLMENT

In conjunction with the fair, the benefits open enrollment period was announced. This provided employees with the perfect opportunity to review and update their benefits, ensuring they are making the most of the resources available to them. The wellness fair served as an ideal backdrop for employees to learn more about their options and make informed decisions regarding their health benefits.

The second annual Wellness Fair was a day of learning, laughter, and community engagement. With increased participation and diverse vendor offerings, the event successfully promoted health and wellness within the organization. We look forward to future fairs and continuing to build a culture of well-being for all employees.



2025 BOYS & GIRLS CLUB SUMMER PROGRAM

By Donna Koehrsen,
Manager, Youth Development

Another successful BGC Summer Program has come and gone, and all the kids are back to school. This past summer program was our 14th year! Since opening our doors at the Pow Wow grounds in the summer of 2011, we have come such a long way. The majority of the youth that started attending the club around that time are now either adults with families of their own, working for the tribe, or young adults figuring out what they want to do with their lives. We are very proud of the success and growth of this program and are thankful for the continued support of our Tribal leaders over the years.

We kicked off our summer program with the annual PCI Environmental Fishing Rodeo the last week of May. Although we got rained on the first day, everyone still had a great time catching catfish. Between weekly field trips, and Cultural, Education and Recreation Department programs, we had Huntsville Botanical Gardens, Huntsville Space and Rocket Center, and Escambia County Alabama 4-H,

on-site bringing programs to our youth. Our Torch and Keystone Clubs also had the opportunity to participate in an overnight Birmingham Zoo Snooze trip in July, got to tour the State of Alabama Marine Resources Saltwater Hatchery in Gulf Shores and the Keystone club did a college tour at Coastal Alabama Community College at the Bay Minette campus.

"The BGC Teen Center has received a Diplomas to Degrees grant from the Boys & Girls club of America Native Services. Over the last two summer programs the teens have gotten the opportunity to tour four post-secondary institutions. The 2024 summer program the teens toured Laurleen B. Wallace Community College, Coastal Community College Opp campus and the University of South Alabama. This summer the Teen Center and Youth Leadership toured Bishop State Community College and Pensacola State College. We are encouraging teens to explore their interests and potential careers along with helping them map the steps to gain entry to a post-secondary institution that meets their needs and develops the skills and attributes necessary to succeed after high school. Along with the college tours, the teens toured the Airbus Final Assembly Line in Mobile, Alabama through Flight Works Alabama." (quote from Melanie Hendrix, Teen Center Manager)

We ended our Summer Program with our first "Back to School Bash"/Open House where families were able to come meet our staff and tour the BGC hall and classrooms for the first time, and a "Summer 25 Showcase" performance that the kids worked on all summer. We had our "BGC Open Enrollment" in July and are now ready for a great 2025/2026 after-school program.

BGC AFTER-SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM

Persons interested in receiving more information should contact Genia Boutwell at 251-368-9136 Ext 2242.



SOLICITATIONS *and* GIFTS

By Carrie Martin, Ethics Board Chair

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ootball season is in full swing. Most individuals in the south have a favorite team they rally and support during the season. During this time of year, you may hear things such as, “Hey, do you still have those season tickets?” or “I wanting to go to a certain game, do you have any connections getting some tickets?” While this is acceptable and many people do have season tickets that they may not use or have connections to get some tickets to a certain game, as an employee within the Tribal organization, you must keep in mind the HR policy and Ethics Code.

SOLICITATIONS AND GIFTS

An employee, key employee or tribal official shall not accept any gift from any single source having a market value of more than \$150.00 at any one time from:

1. Any person or organization that is seeking official or professional action or preferential treatment for that employee, key employee or tribal official.
2. Any person or organization seeking a contractual, financial, or other business relationship with the Tribe.

WHAT DEFINES MARKET VALUE?

According to Merriam-Webster, market value is defined as the price at which something can be sold; the price that buyers are willing to pay for something. For example, fan day at Alabama and Auburn brings parents with their children from all over the state. Most of these individuals will have purchased a hat, T-shirt, football, etc. in case they are lucky enough to be one who gets the item signed. That item, not depending on who signed it has a different market value than when it was purchased.

Football memorabilia and tickets are just one of many different items which can be considered as a gift. When you are offered free gifts you must ask yourself, what is the market value of this item? While a gift is a thing which is given to someone without payment, be aware of the sheep in wolf's clothing. Nothing is free in the business world.

As with some of the other code of conducts, solicitation and gifts has exceptions as well:

1. Gifts for social or traditional events.
2. Gifts such a complimentary items offered to public at large.
3. Gifts received on behalf of the Poarch Creek Indians in the course of diplomatic relations with other Tribal, state, or federal governments.
Note: These items are not taken home; they stay at the Tribe for viewing/archives.
4. Awards or honors publicly presented in recognition of public service. **You may take these home.**
5. Food and beverage consumed at banquets, receptions, business dinners, conference, or similar events and political contributions (no more than \$150 from any one person or organization).

We all look forward to receiving gifts. Gifts can bring joy to others, but sometimes that gift can cause more harm, than just saying, no thank you.

As we continue through this season of football, holidays, there will be many gifts given and received. Just make sure that yours is a gift from the heart, whether giving or receiving with no strings attached.



TAHO APPLICATION

ATTENTION TRIBAL CITIZENS

If you are 19 or older and interested in a new home, now is the time to act! The **PCI Housing Department** will be accepting applications for the TAHO Program.

Application Deadline:

STARTS: Monday, October 6, 2025

ENDS: Friday, December 12, 2025

To Apply, You Will Need to Provide:

- 2024 Tax Returns
- Social Security Card(s) of all people listed on the application.
- Tribal ID Card(s)
- Marriage certificate (if applicable)
- Driver's License of all people listed on the application.
- Letter of First-Generation Indian Descendant (if applicable)
- Copy of divorce papers (if applicable)
- Custody Verification (if applicable)
- Credit Score of 550 or Higher
- Must meet medium income limits.
- Current lease or mortgage
- Other required documents (as applicable)

Visit the PCI Housing Department today to begin your TAHO application!



STRONGHEARTS

Native Helpline

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1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)

Chat online at:
strongheartshelpline.org

24/7 safe, confidential and anonymous domestic and sexual violence helpline for Native Americans and Alaska Natives, offering culturally-appropriate support and advocacy.

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Assisting Tribal Members
Escambia & Baldwin County, AL





Internal Communications

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Atmore, AL 36502



CREEK CORNER

OCTOBER 2025 IMPORTANT DATES

10.1	SUBMISSION DEADLINE November Issue	
10.2	TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers	4:00 PM
10.3	FAMILY COURT Tribal Courtroom	
10.7	TRIBAL COURT Tribal Courtroom	
10.7-8	MUSEUM GIFT SHOP CLOSED Inventory	
10.16	TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers	4:00 PM
10.16	BGC FALL FESTIVAL PCCC	6:00 PM
10.17	FAMILY COURT Tribal Courtroom	
10.21	TRIBAL COURT Tribal Courtroom	
11.1	E-WASTE RECYCLING EVENT Fire Station 1	8:00 AM - 12:00 PM