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2026

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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the POARCH CREEK INDIANS

creek corner

Descendants of the Hostile Creek Indians

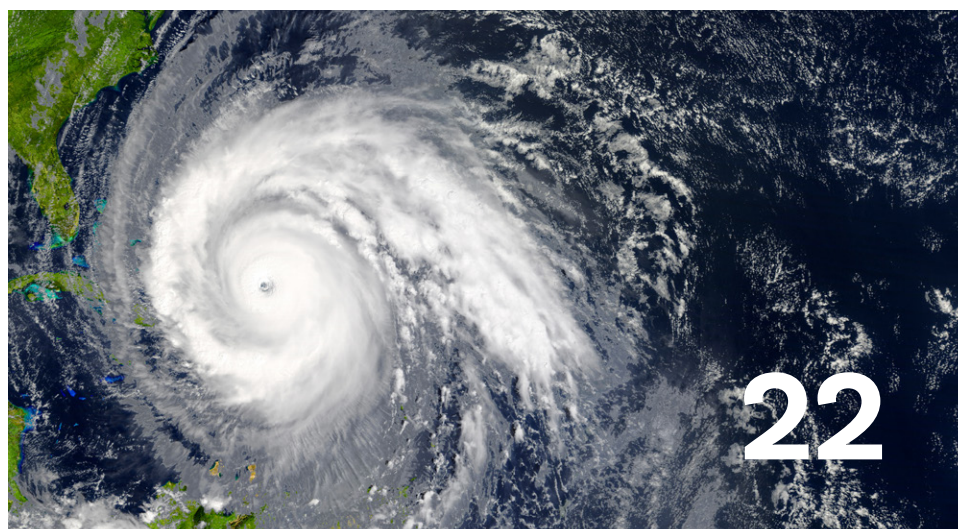
REVIEWING A HISTORICAL NEWSPAPER
ARTICLE THROUGH TODAY'S LENS

**POARCH CREEK INDIANS AND MAGIC MOMENTS
CONTINUE MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIP AT OWA**

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**Poarch Creek Indians
Host Māori
Representatives
From New Zealand
Iwi (Tribe)**

More info on page 28



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SHARON DELMAR
Editor, Creek Corner

“Preparedness is about planning ahead, staying informed, and working together. ...every effort contributes to a more resilient community.”

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

“

S

eptember is National Preparedness Month, a reminder that the steps we take today help protect and strengthen our tomorrow. While preparedness often brings to mind emergency plans and storm readiness, it also reflects a broader commitment to caring for our families, our community, and our future.

Preparedness is about planning ahead, staying informed, and working together. Whether preparing our homes for hurricane season, preserving our traditions, or supporting the programs and services that strengthen the Poarch Creek Indians, every effort contributes to a more resilient community.

Across Tribal Government, preparedness takes many forms. It is reflected in the people who serve our community each day, the planning that supports essential services, and the shared commitment to ensuring a strong and stable future. These efforts, both seen and unseen, help create a foundation of resilience that benefits us all.

As you explore this month's Creek Corner, I hope these stories inspire you to reflect on how today's thoughtful choices help strengthen our community for tomorrow.

MVTO, SHARON DELMAR





**GOING FURTHER,
TOGETHER**



**ATMORE
POARCH
WETUMPKA**





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.

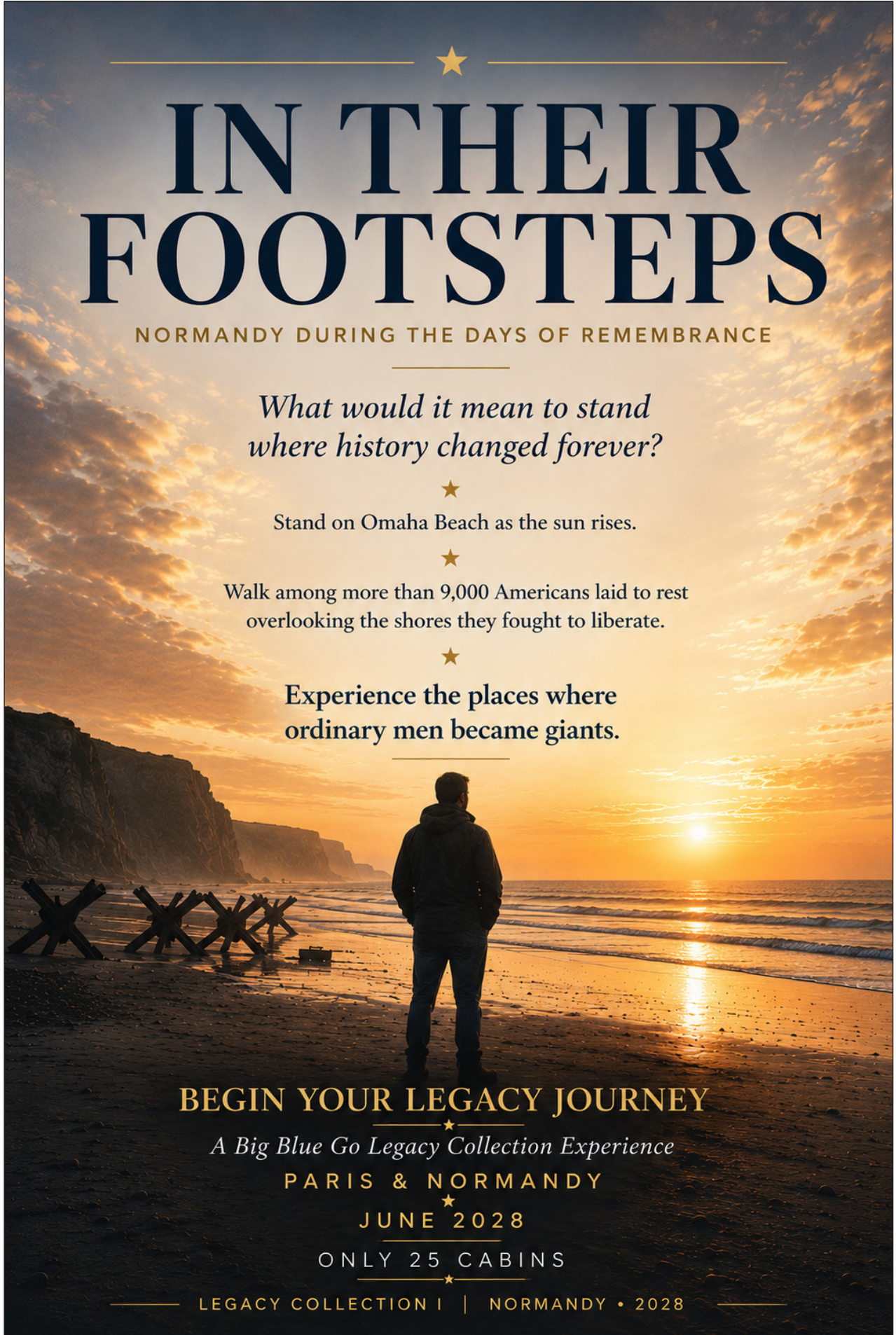
TOP ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT)

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

BOTTOM ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT)

At-Large Council Members:
Dewitt Carter
Christina Flint-Lowe
Sandy Hollinger
Keith Martin
Arthur Mothershed





IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS

NORMANDY DURING THE DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

*What would it mean to stand
where history changed forever?*

Stand on Omaha Beach as the sun rises.

Walk among more than 9,000 Americans laid to rest
overlooking the shores they fought to liberate.

Experience the places where
ordinary men became giants.

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DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

THE HISTORY OF THE POARCH CREEK INDIANS JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Submitted by Keesha O'Barr Frye

For nearly four decades, the Poarch Creek Indians Tribal Court has served as a cornerstone of justice, accountability, and healing for the Tribal community. What began as a small court system has grown into a comprehensive judicial department that not only upholds Tribal law but also provides innovative programs that strengthen families, support recovery, and improve the lives of Tribal Members.

THE BEGINNING OF TRIBAL JUSTICE

The Tribal Court System was established in 1987 following the Tribe's acquisition of a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) contract. This marked a significant milestone in the exercise of the Tribe's sovereignty following federal recognition in 1984. The establishment of the court provided the Tribe with the authority to administer justice within its own community while laying the foundation for future growth.

A VISIONARY LEADER

In 1991, Donna McGhee White was appointed as the Tribal Court Director. Under her leadership, the Court expanded beyond traditional judicial services and embraced a vision centered on rehabilitation, second chances, and community wellness. Her dedication and forward-thinking approach continue to influence the Tribal Court today.

LEADING THE WAY IN TRIBAL WELLNESS

One of the Court's most significant accomplishments came in 1996 with the creation of the Healing to Wellness Court. Through Donna White's efforts in securing grant funding, the Poarch Creek Indians became one of only four Tribal Courts nationwide to receive funding to establish a Drug Court.

The program was designed to provide individuals struggling with substance use disorders an opportunity to rebuild their lives through treatment, accountability, and support. By 1998, the Wellness Court welcomed its first participant and quickly became recognized for mentoring other Tribal nations interested in developing similar recovery-focused court programs.

Today, the Poarch Creek Indians remains home to the nation's oldest continuously operating Tribal Wellness Court, serving as a model for Tribal justice systems across the country.

EXPANDING RECOVERY SERVICES

The Tribal Court continued to broaden its services in 2003 by hiring its first Addictions Counselor, Wes Hayles. His leadership helped establish a comprehensive treatment approach that combined counseling, accountability, and recovery support for Tribal Members affected by addiction. Following the passing of Donna McGhee White in 2005, Tribal member, Keesha O'Barr (Frye) was appointed Tribal Court Director. Building upon Donna's vision, she introduced new initiatives while preserving the Court's mission of compassion, accountability, and service to the community.

BUILDING A STRONGER RECOVERY COMMUNITY

Recognizing that recovery extends beyond treatment, the Tribal Court established the Aftercare Community Reinforcement Program (ACRP) in 2008. The program encourages long-term sobriety through community involvement, positive reinforcement, and incentives earned by participants as they continue their recovery journey.

In 2014, additional Tribal funding expanded treatment opportunities by providing financial assistance for inpatient substance use treatment. This initiative gave Tribal members access to higher levels of care while reducing incarceration and improving long-term recovery outcomes.

SUPPORTING RECOVERY THROUGH EMPLOYMENT

Understanding that stable employment is essential to sustained recovery, the Tribal Court launched the Employment Recovery Program (ERP) in 2020. The program helps participants gain valuable work experience, develop job skills, and prepare for long-term employment while continuing their recovery. By addressing both employment and sobriety, ERP has become another vital component of the Court's holistic approach.



OPENING THE DOORS TO SOBER LIVING

In 2022, another milestone was achieved with the opening of the Stepping Stones Sober Living House. The facility provides a safe, structured, and supportive environment for individuals transitioning from treatment into independent living.

The Sober Living House was dedicated to the vision of Wes Hayles, whose passion for helping individuals achieve lasting recovery inspired countless lives. Although he passed away in 2021 before seeing the project completed, his legacy continues through the many individuals who have found hope and healing within its walls.

EXPANDING PEER RECOVERY SERVICES

In 2025, the Tribal Court expanded its commitment to recovery by establishing the Peer Support Program. Recognizing the value of lived experience in helping individuals achieve and maintain sobriety, the program hired two Addiction Recovery Assistants (ARAs) to provide mentorship, encouragement, and ongoing support to participants throughout their recovery journey.

The Peer Support Program also introduced peer-led recovery meetings on the Poarch reservation, creating a safe and welcoming environment where Tribal Members and community members can share experiences, build meaningful connections, and strengthen their recovery through mutual support. These meetings have become an important resource for individuals seeking fellowship, accountability, and hope while reinforcing the Tribal Court's mission of promoting long-term recovery and community wellness.

CONTINUING THE LEGACY

Today, the Poarch Creek Indians Tribal Court has grown from a single employee in 1989 to a multidisciplinary team of more than twenty professionals, including judges, attorneys, counselors, probation officers, case managers, peer support specialists, administrative staff, and recovery professionals.

The department continues to expand its services while remaining committed to its founding mission—administering justice with fairness, promoting accountability, and providing opportunities for healing and recovery.

As the Tribal Court looks toward the future, it remains dedicated to strengthening the community by creating pathways to wellness, restoring families, and helping individuals build healthier, more productive lives.

IN HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

The Tribal Court proudly honors the lasting contributions of Donna McGhee White (November 14, 1957 – October 7, 2005) and James “Wes” Hayles (October 5, 1971 – April 12, 2021). Their vision, leadership, and unwavering commitment to serving others continue to inspire the work of the Tribal Court and the lives of those it serves every day.

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KEESHA O'BARR FRYE

PCI Tribal Court Director

TRIBAL JUDICIAL RECOVERY & TREATMENT PROGRAMS

The Poarch Creek Indians Tribal Judicial System is committed to providing opportunities for healing, accountability, and long-term recovery. Through a comprehensive continuum of care, the Judicial Department offers treatment, counseling, recovery support, supervision, and employment services designed to help Tribal Members and First Generation Descendants overcome addiction, rebuild their lives, and achieve lasting success.

Whether an individual is entering treatment for the first time or continuing their recovery journey, our programs provide the structure, guidance, and support needed to promote healthier individuals, stronger families, and a stronger Tribal community.

TRIBAL COURT SUBSTANCE ABUSE GROUP MEETINGS SCHEDULE

ALL MEETINGS HELD IN

Building 300 Tribal Court Meeting Room
5811 Jack Springs Road, Atmore, Alabama
Open to Poarch Community Members

TRIBAL COURT SUBSTANCE ABUSE GROUP MEETINGS

Peer led group substance abuse meeting.
Thursdays at 5:30pm

SMART RECOVERY GROUP MEETINGS

Counselor led substance abuse group meeting.
Tuesdays at 5:30pm

FREEDOM WITHIN GROUP MEETINGS

Peer led group substance abuse meeting.
Fridays at 4:00pm

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Call (251) 368-9136 ext. 2163

HEALING TO WELLNESS COURT

The Healing to Wellness Court is a court-supervised treatment program designed for Tribal Members and First Generation Descendants who have been referred by the Tribal Court, Family Services, or another state or county court system.

Participants complete a structured four-phase program that combines judicial supervision with intensive treatment services. Throughout the program, participants attend regular court appearances, counseling sessions, and random drug screenings while working toward long-term sobriety. During the initial phase, participants are placed on house arrest with GPS monitoring to provide stability and accountability.

The program requires a minimum commitment of thirteen months, although each participant progresses at a pace based on individual needs, treatment progress, and personal motivation. When clinically appropriate, participants may also complete inpatient treatment or reside in the Stepping Stones Sober Living House before advancing through the program.

ADDICTIONS COUNSELING SERVICES

Professional counseling services are available to Tribal Members and First Generation Descendants who have been referred by Tribal Court, Family Services, Wellness Court, or another state or county court.

Our Licensed Mental Health Treatment Counselor provides individual counseling for those experiencing substance use disorders, domestic violence concerns, or other court-related behavioral health issues. Counseling focuses on helping participants identify the underlying causes of addiction, develop healthy coping skills, improve decision-making, and establish a strong foundation for lasting recovery.

DRUG & ALCOHOL INPATIENT TREATMENT REFERRAL PROGRAM

For individuals requiring a higher level of care, the Tribal Judicial System provides financial assistance for inpatient drug and alcohol treatment.

The program assists eligible Tribal Members and First Generation Descendants with placement into approved treatment facilities throughout Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and other locations when appropriate. Participants agree to complete treatment by signing a voluntary assignment of their General Welfare and/or Per Capita payment, which is only collected if treatment is not successfully completed.

Following discharge, participants continue their recovery through ongoing counseling services provided by the Tribal Judicial System.

TREATMENT INCENTIVE AFTERCARE PROGRAM

Recovery does not end after treatment—it continues every day.

The Aftercare Program encourages long-term sobriety by rewarding participants who actively engage in counseling, maintain sobriety, and consistently pass random drug screenings. Incentives may include items such as gas cards, utility assistance, childcare assistance, clothing, and other supportive resources that help participants remain focused on recovery while rebuilding their lives.

STEPPING STONES SOBER LIVING HOUSE

Stepping Stones provides a safe, structured, and supportive transitional living environment for Tribal Members and First Generation Descendants who have successfully completed inpatient treatment or another approved treatment program.

Residents are required to maintain sobriety through regular drug testing, participate in bi-weekly counseling sessions, obtain and maintain employment, and contribute a monthly participation fee based upon income. The goal of the program is to help residents develop independent living skills, establish financial stability, and successfully transition into permanent housing.

Most participants remain in the program for up to one year, although extensions may be granted when extenuating circumstances exist.

PROBATION & COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Tribal Judicial System provides probation supervision and community service monitoring for Tribal Members ordered through the Tribal Court.

Probation Officers work closely with participants by conducting regular meetings, random drug testing, home visits, curfew checks, and community supervision to promote accountability while supporting successful rehabilitation.

The department also coordinates community service assignments ordered by the Tribal Court.

COMMUNITY RECOVERY MEETINGS

Recovery is strengthened through community.

The Tribal Judicial Department hosts a peer-led Drug and Alcohol Recovery Support Meeting every Thursday at 5:30 p.m. at the front entrance of the Tribal Courtroom. These meetings are open to all community members seeking support, encouragement, and fellowship in their recovery journey.

EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY PROGRAM (ERP)

Employment is an important part of long-term recovery.

The Employment Recovery Program helps recovering Tribal Members and First Generation Descendants develop valuable job skills while maintaining sobriety. Participants work 30-32 hours each week under the supervision of Judicial Department staff while gaining work experience, building resumes, completing employment applications, and preparing for permanent employment opportunities.

The program provides participants with the confidence, responsibility, and experience necessary to successfully re-enter the workforce and achieve long-term independence.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Tribal Judicial System believes recovery is possible through accountability, treatment, education, employment, and community support. Every program is designed to help participants build healthier lives while strengthening the future of the Poarch Creek Indians.

For additional information or to request an application for any Tribal Judicial Recovery Program, please contact:

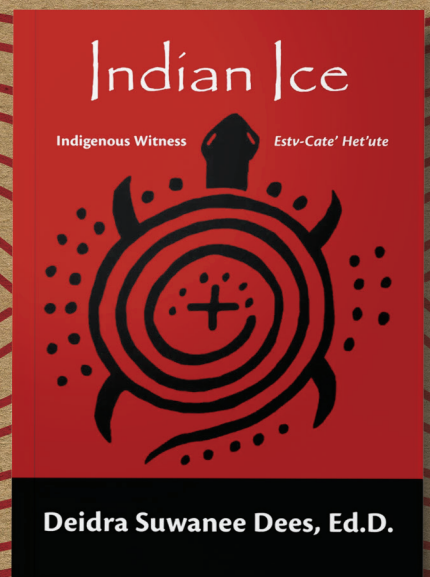
Poarch Creek Indians Tribal Judicial System | (251) 368-9136 ext. 2660

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YOU ARE INVITED TO A

POETRY READING, STOMPDANCE, & DINNER

Free And Open To The Public



Tuesday, October 6, 2026 • 6 pm
Old Fred L. McGhee Building
Poarch Creek Indians
Pow Wow Grounds
44 Creek Drive, Atmore, AL

Tribal Citizen Henehv Douglas "Poncho" Kelley invites you to a stompdance, delicious southern dinner, and poetry reading of *Indian Ice* by local author Dr. Deidra Suwanee Dees. For more than 15 years, she served at the Poarch Creek Indians as Museum/Cultural Director, Education Director, and Office of Archives & Records Management Director/Tribal Archivist. Dr. Dees teaches Native American Studies at the University of South Alabama. Mvto.

Questions? Call (251) 253-9181 or
e-mail deesdeidra@gmail.com

MEET THE TRIBAL JUDICIAL TEAM

The Poarch Creek Indians Tribal Judicial System is much more than a courtroom. Our department is committed to administering justice while providing comprehensive services that promote accountability, treatment, recovery, and long-term success for Tribal Members and their families. The Judicial Department is organized into five specialized units, each working together to provide a continuum of services for the community.

1

TRIBAL COURT UNIT

The Tribal Court Unit is responsible for administering justice and ensuring the efficient operation of the Tribal Court System.

The Tribal Court is led by Chief Tribal Judge Joseph Brogden and Associate Tribal Judge John “Kirk” Garrett, who preside over Tribal Court proceedings and upholds the fair and impartial administration of justice. Keesha O’Barr Frye, Tribal Court Administrator and Court Magistrate, directs the day-to-day operations of the Judicial Department, providing administrative leadership and supervision for department staff. Charity Miller, Deputy Tribal Court Administrator, oversees daily staff operations and manages child support collections, court-ordered financial obligations, and other court funding collections, helping ensure the

efficient administration of Judicial Department programs and services.

Supporting the Court are Clerk of Court, Gina Harbison and Tribal Court Assistant, Angela Wright, who oversee the day-to-day administrative operations of the Court. Their responsibilities include maintaining official court records for the Tribal Court, Wellness Court, Supreme Court, and Ethics Board; coordinating communications between the Court, attorneys, and litigants; preparing court dockets and case files; processing legal documents; and managing financial transactions, including bonds, court fines, garnishments, and Sober Living accounts.

Together, they ensure the Judicial System operates efficiently while providing quality service to the community.

2

TREATMENT & CASE MANAGEMENT UNIT

Recovery is at the heart of the Tribal Judicial System. Our Treatment & Case Management Unit provides professional counseling, case management, and recovery support services to individuals referred through the Tribal Court and Wellness Court.

The team includes:

- Raeven Ramer, Licensed Mental Health Counselor
- Magan Stabler Taylor,
Counseling Administrative Assistant
- Alexandria Stallworth, Case Manager

Services include:

- Individual and group substance abuse counseling
- Comprehensive case management for Wellness Court participants and Sober Living residents
- Substance abuse assessments and treatment referrals
- Drug education and prevention initiatives
- Coordination of recovery support services
- Weekly recovery meetings for community members
- Coordinating the After Care Program

The goal is to help participants achieve lasting recovery while improving their overall health and quality of life.

3 STEPPING STONES SOBER LIVING UNIT

The Stepping Stones Sober Living House provides a structured, safe, and supportive environment where individuals can continue building healthy, independent lives following treatment.

The Sober Living team is led by Sylina O'Barr, Sober Living Manager, with the support of Resident Assistants:

- Madison Wright
- Dakota O'Barr
- Ija McNeal
- River Ramer
- Norma Hall
- Madison Griffey

Staff provide around-the-clock supervision, ensuring residents maintain accountability while developing life skills necessary for independent living.

Responsibilities include:

- Twenty-four-hour supervision, seven days a week
- Resident admissions and discharges
- Drug testing and counseling coordination
- Facility maintenance and resident safety
- Independent living and life skills coaching
- Employment readiness and personal development

The Stepping Stones program provides residents with the stability and support needed to successfully transition back into the community.

4 PROBATION UNIT

The Probation Unit promotes accountability while supporting rehabilitation through supervision and community-based services.

The unit includes:

- Nathan Smith, Probation Officer
- Christopher Lee, Employment Recovery Assistant

Together they:

- Supervise individuals placed on Tribal probation
- Monitor GPS house arrest participants

- Conduct approximately 120 random drug screens each month
- Supervise community service assignments
- Coordinate the Employment Recovery Program
- Monitor compliance with Tribal Court orders
- Respond to after-hours emergencies involving electronic monitoring and curfew violations

Their work helps participants remain accountable while encouraging positive lifestyle changes.

5 PEER SUPPORT UNIT

The Peer Support Unit was established to expand recovery support services for Tribal Members and First Generation Descendants. Recognizing the importance of peer mentorship and lived experience, the program provides encouragement, accountability, and guidance to individuals as they work toward long-term recovery.

The team includes:

- Cassidy Murphy, Substance Abuse Treatment Coordinator
- Jeremy McGhee, Addiction Recovery Assistant
- Joseph Jacob Thomas, Addiction Recovery Assistant

Peer Support staff work alongside participants by providing mentorship, recovery coaching, transportation assistance, and encouragement while helping individuals remain engaged in treatment and recovery services.

Services include:

- Peer recovery coaching and mentorship
- Individual recovery support and encouragement

- Transportation assistance for treatment and recovery-related appointments
- Recovery check-ins and follow-up support
- Coordination of community recovery resources
- Facilitation of peer-led recovery meetings
- Outreach to individuals seeking recovery support
- Assistance with relapse prevention and accountability
- Coordination of the Financial Inpatient Assistance Program

The Peer Support Unit also coordinates peer-led recovery meetings held each Thursday evening, providing a welcoming environment where Tribal Members and community members can connect with others in recovery, build healthy support systems, and strengthen their commitment to sobriety. These meetings have become an important part of the Tribal Judicial System's recovery continuum by fostering hope, fellowship, and long-term success.

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POARCH CREEK INDIANS

Housing Fair

Poarch Creek Community Center
517 Martin Rd | Atmore, AL
September 29, 2026 | Starts at 5:30pm

Join us for food, door prizes, vendors and a
Home Maintenance presentation by Josh Gordon.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Regina Brown at 251.368.9136 ext. 2254



HOUSING DEPARTMENT



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americassbdc.org/find-your-sbdc-iframe/



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LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP OF ALL UNITS

The Tribal Judicial Department is directed by:

- Keesha O'Barr Frye, Tribal Court Administrator
- Charity Miller, Deputy Tribal Court Administrator

Together, they oversee all Judicial operations while continuing to expand programs that promote justice, accountability, treatment, recovery, and community wellness.

THE WELLNESS COURT TEAM

The Healing to Wellness Court is a collaborative effort that brings together professionals from multiple disciplines to support participants on their path to recovery within the Wellness Court Program.

The Wellness Court Team includes:

- John "Kirk" Garrett – Associate Tribal Court Judge
- Jason Hadley – Tribal Prosecutor
- James "Jim" Hart – Tribal Public Defender
- Amanda Montgomery – Family Services Director
- Ashley Wilson – Tribal Health Department Pharmacist
- Nathan Smith – Probation Officer
- Sylina O'Barr – Sober Living Manager
- Cassidy Murphy – Substance Abuse Coordinator
- Alexandria Stallworth – Case Manager
- Christopher Lee – Employment Recovery Assistant
- Keesha O'Barr Frye – Tribal Court Administrator

Working together, this multidisciplinary team combines legal oversight, treatment services, family support, medical expertise, and recovery resources to help participants successfully overcome addiction and build healthier futures.

COMMITTED TO JUSTICE. DEDICATED TO RECOVERY. FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY.

Every member of the Tribal Judicial Team plays an important role in helping individuals restore their lives, strengthen their families, and build a healthier future. Through collaboration, compassion, and accountability, the department continues to fulfill its mission of creating a path to wellness and strength.

2025 JUDICIAL SYSTEM STATISTICS

Category	Total
Civil Cases	33
Criminal Cases	18
Domestic Cases	4
Juvenile Cases	0
Supreme Court Cases	0
Traffic Cases	2
Ethics Cases	1
Pleadings in Court	44
Wellness Court participants	12
Wellness Court hearings	49
Sober House participants	22
Aftercare participants	9
Employment Recovery participants	9
In-Patient treatment	18
Probation participants	20
Violation of Probation Petitions filed	4
Drug test totals	1108
Child support ledgers	74
Civil Garnishment ledgers	142
Per Cap/GWA garnishment ledgers	7
Group treatment sessions	47
Group treatment participants	177
Individual treatment sessions	695
AA/NA meeting attendees	599
AA/NA meals provided	26
Sober House beds used	3080
Sober House meals provided	2019

The following newspaper article was published in 1904 in the Montgomery Advertiser.

At the time of its publication, the federal government was compiling the Dawes Rolls for the “Five Civilized Tribes” in present-day Oklahoma. At the same time, the remaining Creek Indians in Alabama were still a visible and distinct community, important enough to be the subject of this feature article.

We are sharing this article exactly as it was written, because it provides a rare look at the ancestors of today’s Poarch Creek Indians through the perspective of its time. Some of the language is outdated, but the article preserves valuable historical information.

The title, “Descendants of the Hostile Creek Indians,” reminds us that many Poarch Creek families descended from Redstick ancestors who followed leaders such as William Weatherford. During the effort to achieve federal recognition from the U.S. government, Tribal leaders often emphasized our “Friendly Creek” history. But even at that time, Calvin McGhee testified in court that he would have fought alongside William Weatherford. Both parts of our history are important to understanding who we are today.

Throughout the article, we have added comments to provide historical context, explain outdated or inaccurate claims, and connect the people and events discussed to Poarch Creek history. Many of these topics have been discussed in previous newsletter articles, and many more will be explored in future publications.

By the PCI Historic Preservation Department

POARCH 101: DESCENDANTS OF THE HOSTILE CREEK INDIANS

Red Men Settled on the Little River

**Some history of Alabama's Early Days
When the Anglo-Saxon Contended with the
Aborigine for Possession of the Soil.**

By Will T. Sheehan.

Mobile, Nov. 23 -- (Staff Correspondence.)--The victorious Creeks, who triumphed at Burnt Corn and Fort Mims, were destined to learn that truth which history of all times records. No inferior race ever successfully waged war with the Anglo-Saxon.

They were destined to learn that the white man's will might be thwarted for a time, but that no black man, red man or yellow man could stand between the Anglo-Saxon and the goal of his ambitions. In suffering and death they were to learn that the white man's bulldog tenacity, his indomitable will, would triumph and trample upon every attempted interference.

The Creeks who tasted the sweets of victory at Fort Mims, and went drunk with victory were to become hunted and starved outcasts in the swamps of the Coosa, the Tallapoosa, and the Alabama. Horse Shoe Bend was but a few months behind Fort Mims and Burnt Corn was to be avenged in the meanwhile at Talladega and Echaanata. The streams of their native land were to run red with the blood of the Creeks and their women and children were to live as beasts of the field and forest.

The bloody-handed victors at Fort Mims recked little of this, however, as they travelled to Pensacola and there received the pay for scalps they had taken. On their return Weatherford collected his followers at Echaanata, an Indian town on the Alabama river a few miles below Montgomery. The site of the village which the Indians called Holy Ground, is now in Lowndes County.

In the meanwhile two definite things had been done by the white settlers who knew they were in desperate straits. An urgent appeal was sent to General Andrew Jackson, commanding the militia of Tennessee, and a new army was raised among the Bigbee settlers and the white people of Mississippi.

The appeal to Jackson fell upon eager ears. He was then in bed suffering from the grievous wounds he sustained in his famous encounter with Thomas H. and Jesse Benton at Nashville. Jackson marched his Tennessee volunteers south inflicting a defeat upon the Indians at Talladega.

The Bigbee and Mississippi volunteers came north to join forces.

OUTRAGES UPON SETTLERS

There were other engagements of minor importance, small but sanguinary affairs and there were the outrages upon lonely settlers and travellers that ever marked Indian warfare.

The white soldiers received valuable assistance from Indian allies. The Choctaws were especially pronounced in their sympathies with the whites. And some of the Creeks threw their fortune with the settlers. When Fort Mims was taken some of Weatherford's own family were within its walls.

Hannah McNac, a blood relation of Red Eagle, was taken to Pensacola and sold as a slave to General Panton. Panton however, knew her relation to the war leader and when the trouble was over he restored her to her family.

At Echanaata where the Indians entrenched in their town were attacked by the whites, Weatherford did one of the things that made his personality and his career so romantic and so picturesque. In his poem "Red Eagle," Meek gives a stirring description of Weatherford's leap on horseback from a bluff into

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

In the first paragraph, it's obvious that its language contains racist ideas that were common among many writers of the time. This article was published almost ninety years after the Creek War. Reading it today helps us understand not only the Creek War, but also the prejudice that Alabama Creeks continued to face long after.

Redstick forces were spread across different parts of Creek country rather than gathered in one place. Most Alibamu and Koasati Redsticks were found at Ekvn-Vcakv, or Holy Ground, called Echaanata by this article. This was one of the main camps, led by William Weatherford and Josiah Francis. Many families around Little River had connections to these leaders, making this an important part of Poarch Creek history.

Andrew Jackson and many other Tennessee settlers were eager to fight because enormous pressure already existed to take Creek land. Expansion into Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama had created years of conflict before the Creek War began.

...continued on next page

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

It's misleading to say the Choctaws simply had more "sympathies for the whites". The Choctaw people had their own reasons for mostly opposing the Redsticks. Their decisions reflected alliances and regional politics, not simply support for white settlers. By this time, the Creek War had become connected to the larger War of 1812. Some Creek leaders looked to the British and Spanish for support against the United States, while many Choctaw leaders chose to work with the Americans. Both sides were trying to protect their own people and land during a time of tremendous uncertainty.

'Red Eagle' was a later nickname and was not the name William Weatherford used during his lifetime. His true name was Oponvkv Fvccv-Hayv, which meant "Truth Teller," and his nickname was Yellow Billy. Hannah McNac (Moniac) was the wife of Josiah Francis and the sister of both Sam Moniac and William Weatherford, connecting several important Creek families.

This newspaper uses sensational language, but it's true that a growing religious revival spread among many Upper Creek towns in the years before the Creek War. Inspired by prophetic movements that had developed among Native nations farther north, Josiah Francis became one of the new Redstick prophets.

Many engagements during the Creek War ended with overwhelming losses for Creek people, including women and children. But at Holy Ground, delays were blamed on scout Sam Moniac as they circled around the swamp, allowing many families (including Sam's) to escape across the Alabama River before General Claiborne's forces and Choctaw allies reached in close enough to shoot.

The fact that outside forces could enter and kill at the protected site was a huge blow to the belief in the prophets. Many Redstick warriors, including William Weatherford, continued fighting not for the prophets, but because they believed they were defending their homeland and their people.

This article is correct that the story of Weatherford's leap became more dramatic over time, but the fact that he stayed behind to fight until the end is well documented. Even without the later exaggerations of the cliff's height, his escape across the Alabama River remains one of the most famous moments of the Creek War.

the Alabama river. He leads up to it with a portrayal of the uncanny orgies of the medicine men of the village the night before the fight.

The village was supposed to be holy ground, sacred from the foot of the white man. The medicine men in the weird glow of the pine knot fires is pictured as predicting the death of every white man who should profane the sacred soil by his touch. He was to die by the lightning and the storm, to shrivel up in the shoots of flame that would dash from the Heavens.

But the Indians on the next day were beaten back, hemmed in on the river bank and defeated with great slaughter. At the close of the disastrous day Weatherford was seen galloping along the river bluff on a fleet white horse. He was hemmed in and there was apparently no escape for him. As he spurred his horse along, he turned his head and both disappeared over the bluff. Horse and rider sank beneath the waters of Alabama. Both rose after a few moments. Weatherford was holding the mane of his horse with one hand and with the other he held his rifle high above his head.

He regained the saddle as the horse swam the river, and he shouted in defiance to his foes as the intelligent animal climbed the Autauga County bank and disappeared with him in the bushes.

Fabulous stories were told of the height from which Weatherford made his leap. The bluff was really only ten or fifteen feet above the water.

BATTLE OF HORSE SHOE BEND

The battle of Horse Shoe Bend was fought March 27, 1814. General Jackson, commanding the whites and their Indian allies, had under him about 2,000 men. The hostile Creeks who were called Red Sticks because their clubs were painted red, numbered about 1,000. They occupied a strongly entrenched position on a bank of the Tallapoosa River a few miles above the present town of Tallassee. The fighting was sanguinary. The entrenchments were taken with great loss and the Indians were routed with great slaughter.

Major Lemuel P. Montgomery, for whom the city of Montgomery was named, is said to have been the first man to mount the Indian entrenchments, only to fall by a rifle ball. The young man was a brilliant attorney of Tennessee, greatly beloved by Jackson, who, when told of his death said "I have lost the flower of my army."

The belligerent spirit of the Indians was broken and cowed by the awful disaster at Horseshoe Bend. Out of the 1,000 men they had in the fight, 557 were killed. Jackson lost thirty-two men killed and thirty-six men wounded. The remaining braves with their women and children were scattered through the swamps and forests.

Weatherford was an outlaw with a price upon his head.

Some days later he made a dramatic entrance into Jackson's camp, an entrance which has been described in poetry and history. He rode the horse that had carried him through the various battles. Across his saddle was a deer which he had killed on his way to camp and which he was to present to General Jackson.

As Weatherford rode into camp Big Warrior, one of the Indian chiefs who had fought with the white people, recognized him. He ran towards him, exclaiming:

"Aah, Billy Weatherford; we've got you at last!"

Weatherford replied with fine scorn

"You traitor, if you give me any of your insolence, I will put a ball through your traitorous heart."

Attracted by the disturbance, Jackson came to the door of his tent.

The defeated leader is said to have thus addressed him:

RED EAGLE'S ADDRESS TO JACKSON

"General Jackson, I am Weatherford. A brave man knows a brave man's heart. I do not come to you to ask for mercy for myself, but to ask for mercy for our women and our children who are starving in the swamps. I fought you as long as I could fight you, and I would continue to fight you if I had ten braves with me, but my warriors are scattered and gone and I can oppose you no longer. I ask that you send parties out, find my starving people, bring them in and feed them, and you can do what you will with me."

Old Hickory is reported to have said "A man who would shoot down as brave a man as that would rob the dead"

Relief parties were sent out and the starving Indians were brought into camp.

Jackson had no wish to punish Weatherford or to see him killed. His protection gave Jackson great concern. In his army were men who had lost relatives in the massacre at Fort Mims. They were impulsive frontiersmen who would not hesitate to shoot down the man who led the assault on the fort.

Weatherford was put in a tent and a guard placed over him for his own safety. Even this was thought to be dangerous and he was removed to Fort Claiborne, where the same precautions were taken. It was still feared that some relative of a victim of Fort Mims would kill him. Acting upon advices from this superior officer, Major Laval, commander of the fort, called Weatherford from his tent one dark night and led him to a horse tied under a tree without the fort.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Many Alabamians do not realize that the city of Montgomery was named after Major Lemuel P. Montgomery, the first white man who was killed during the Battle of Horseshoe Bend.

This article adds a lot of colorful detail that can't be confirmed about Weatherford's entrance to Fort Jackson. Whether every word of this speech is exact or not, it reflects a consistent historical tradition that Weatherford surrendered to save starving Creek women and children after realizing further fighting would only bring more suffering.

Starvation became one of the greatest hardships of the Creek War. Destroyed crops, scattered families, and the loss of hunting grounds left many people without food. Weatherford's surrender helped bring immediate relief to many surviving Creek families who had been hiding out at Moniac's Island since their defeat at Holy Ground.

We agree with the author that the family story shared about Weatherford going to the Hermitage does not make sense with the historical record. Documents show Weatherford remained active in Northwest Florida (not the Hermitage) after his surrender by helping to capture and persuade fleeing Redstick fighters in Spanish Florida to end the war. The story shown here likely reflects later efforts to improve his reputation in the eye of the American public. The danger William Weatherford faced from everyday people, especially relatives of Fort Mims victims, is not exaggerated in this article. It was a stigma he carried with him for the rest of his life, and many of his relatives attempted to repair his story and image the best they could to simply survive without judgement.

Weatherford's connection to Little River, however, was much deeper than this author understood. The region included the ancestral homeland of the Sehoy family and remained closely connected to many Creek families long before and long after the Creek War. William is buried next to his mother Sehoy Weatherford in this area. This author, like many before them, focused on the men of the family line. But in the traditional Creek world, women had authority over the land. Weatherford and Tait's aunt, Sophia McGillivray, was recognized by Creek headmen for holding the official title of stewardship over the region now occupied by the Poarch community and their Little River ancestors.

...continued on next page



"Make your escape," was the whispered advice of the commander. Weatherford pressed the hand of his friend, sprang upon the back of the horse and disappeared in the night.

Charles Weatherford told me that Jackson had carried Weatherford with him to the Hermitage, his home, near Nashville, where he kept him as a guest for nearly two years. The great Tennessean, so Weatherford said, gave the Alabama chieftain a thoroughbred horse to ride home.

This is family tradition among the Weatherfords and is accepted as true by the war leader's grand son. Yet, history makes no mention of this kindly act of Jackson, as it would, in all probability, have done, had the Tennessean taken his vanquished foe with him to his home.

Weatherford was familiar with the country about Little River. His half brother, David Tait, owned a large plantation there. The land was good, and bear, deer, turkeys and other game were to be found in the woods about in great numbers.

WEATHERFORD'S LAST HOME

These things induced Weatherford to settle there and there spend his declining years. It was a favorite spot for other Indians, made so, no doubt, by the excellent hunting, the splendid woods and the fine climate. Some followers of Weatherford and some of the Indians who were opposed to him made their homes in the woods about Little River.

And so it happens that nearly a century later that section is largely peopled with men, women and children of Indian descent. Amalgamation, however, is doing its work slowly but surely.

The life of these people of Indian blood differs but little from the life of whites of pure blood about them. The influence of their Indian ancestors is seen, however, in their appearance and is noticeable in their characteristics.

With W. D. Sowell, editor of the Brewton Pine Belt News, I drove through what is loosely called the "Indian Country." We saw the descendants of Weatherford and his men in their homes, but they differed but little from the homes of the poor white farmer who lives in a boarded two-room or three-room house.

The family connections of the Weatherfords established homes in the southwest corner of Monroe County. They were the Weatherfords, the Tunstalls, the Taites, the Stiggins, the Sisewares [Sizemore], the Shomos, the Lomaxs and the McNacs.

East of Little River in Escambia County there settled the McGees, the Colberts, the Rolands, and the Deas. The Weatherford family connection live about Mt. Pleasant, Mineola and Jeddo in Monroe County. The McGees, Colberts and others, reside principally

about Mortimer and Steadham in Escambia County. The Indian residents however, are widely scattered, some in addition to those mentioned live in the lower edge of Conecuh County and in the upper edge of Baldwin County, while some Indian families live within four or five miles of Atmore.

Sidney Weatherford, a great grandson of William Weatherford, is postmaster at Mineola, while William Shomo, another blood relation, is postmaster at Mt. Pleasant.

INDIANS IN SOUTHERN ARMY

This community of Indian residents furnished between forty and fifty soldiers for the Confederate service. Nearly all of them fell victims to disease and not to battle. The Indian soldiers were peculiarly susceptible to measles and other camp diseases. A few of them, however, returned and resumed their life of hunting and farming in South Alabama. Two prominent veterans at the recent Mobile reunion were William Shomo and Charles Weatherford, noticeable among the other old soldiers by reason of their swarthy skin, black hair and thin beards.

The Indian government was not a democratic government. It is only the white man who believes in the equality of man, and the equality of opportunity. Under the old tribal laws and customs different families had different privileges and some families were entitled to greater consideration than others.

This feeling of aristocracy is noticeable to this day among the descendants of Weatherford. They hold themselves higher than their Indian neighbors across Little River. They hold that their descent from the leaders and the fact that they owned negro slaves before the war entitles them to greater consideration than those of Indian descent who have not those rights for family pride.

William Weatherford and several of his kin were the owners of good farms and of negro slaves. They did not, however, devote themselves so thoroughly to the details of planting as did the white man. They preferred in many instances to rent their slaves out to their white neighbors and give themselves more to the excellent hunting about Little River. William Weatherford died in 1826 from exhaustion brought on by a protracted bear hunt.

The close of the war between the States, with the destruction of their wealth in slaves left Weatherford's descendants impoverished, but they have struggled on and most of them own a small farm and a comfortable home, as homes go in the remoter districts of the State.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

This is where the story begins to connect directly to the modern Poarch Creek Indians, with many names and locations that our current Tribal Citizens will recognize. Many of the families listed in these paragraphs became the core ancestors of today's Tribal community.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

The "feeling of aristocracy" described by the author shows he did not understand the native cultural view of leadership. While certain family lines carried important responsibilities, leadership was earned through service and the respect of the community, not simply through wealth or status.

After the Creek War, many followers of William Weatherford settled in the Little River region. Over time, many descendants gradually blended into the growing settler society. Other Creek families, particularly those who remained more isolated around what later became known as Poarch, experienced greater poverty and discrimination over time.

Creek families lived across a broad region in southwest Alabama after the Creek War. What later became known as Poarch was simply a region of small Indian communities where Creek families continued marrying Creek people and maintaining their identity for a longer period than many of the surrounding settlements.

...continued on next page

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

This last section really focuses on the core ancestors of the modern Poarch Creek community.

William Colbert is an ancestor of many Poarch Creek families. His Chickasaw family connections help explain why many Poarch citizens today have a small amount of Chickasaw ancestry alongside their Creek ancestry.

John Roland (Rolin) is also an ancestor of many Poarch Creek families. Records from his legal case later became valuable historical documentation that helped demonstrate the Tribe's continuous community during the federal recognition process.

Earlier in the article, the author accurately described Creek families living across a wide area of southwest Alabama. Over time, discrimination and isolation caused the modern Poarch community to become the best-known surviving Creek settlement in the region. What became later known as "Poarch" was simply the epicenter of where Creek Indian families had intermarried with other Creeks for a considerably longer period of time.

The author's mention of widespread alcoholism reflects a difficult reality in our community's past. It reminds us that addiction has deep historical roots and is closely tied to the trauma experienced by our ancestors.

Notice how Alabama Creeks and their relatives in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) were "constantly exchanging visits" even as late as 1904 when this was published. This is a reminder that Indian Removal did not completely break the ties between Creek communities. After the Civil War, however, poverty and Jim Crow discrimination made it much harder for families to maintain resources to keep up those connections, let alone take care of their own families.

Some Poarch families on the other hand feared Indian Territory, with elders recalling that, as children, they feared the arrival of government officials or other white men in suits because they believed they might be taken to "I.T.," or Indian Territory by force. The leftover fears of Indian Removal Era appear to have lasted into the 1920s. Connections with other Creeks in Oklahoma were renewed in the 1950s and have remained strong ever since.

The ending statement of the article is clearly outdated. This author saw a community struggling but could not see the generations of hardship that had shaped it. The modern Poarch Creek Indians stands as living proof that our ancestors' perseverance led to a thriving Tribal Nation that continues to economically lead, serve the community, and revitalize culture in the southwestern region of the historic Creek Nation.

The Poarch Creek Indians has remained in our ancestral Creek Nation homelands. We will always welcome other Southeastern Tribal Nations to share in the stewardship, appreciation, and protection of the natural and cultural places that are part of our shared ancestral landscape.

LAST OF THE HOSTILES

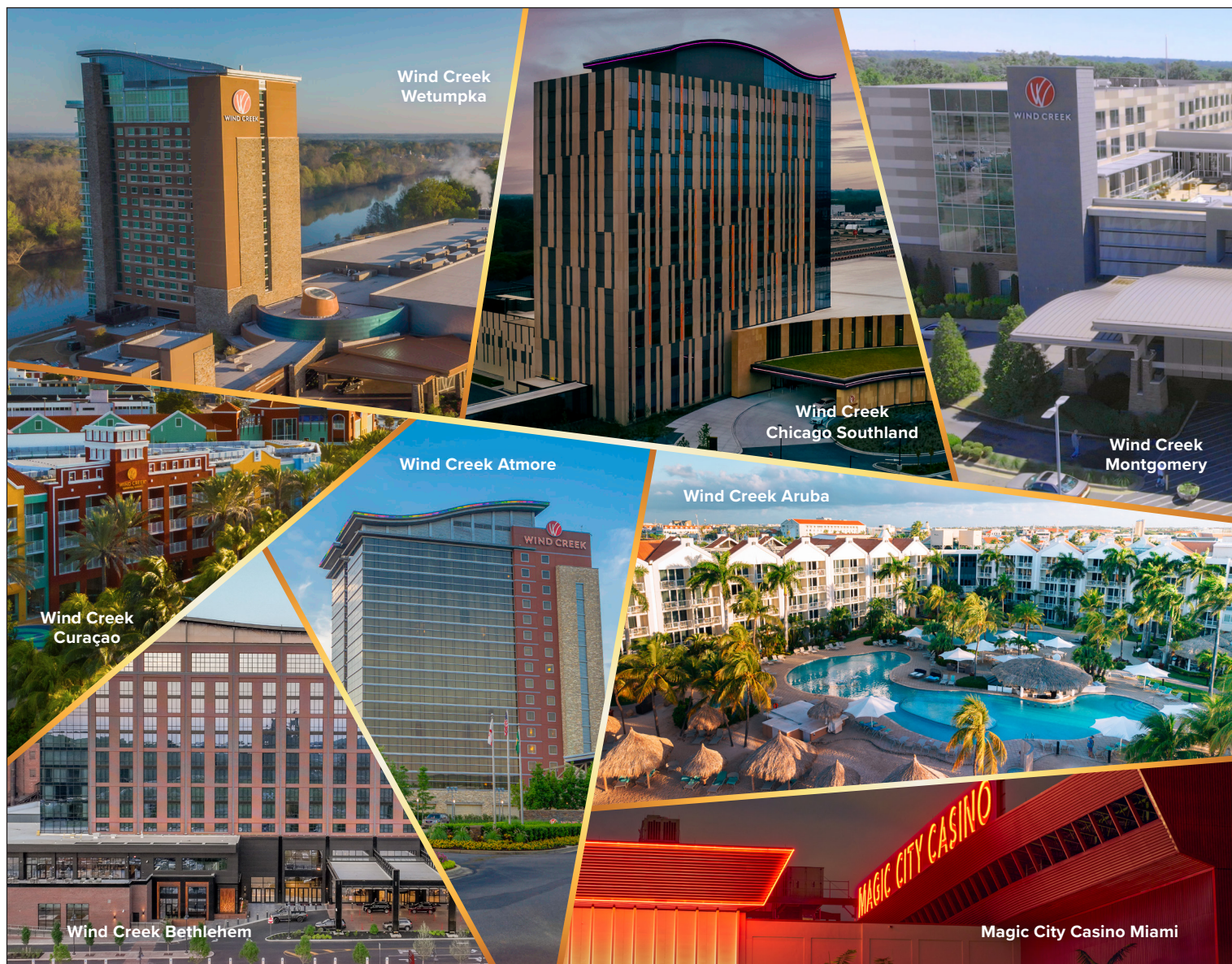
William Colbert, who died at an extreme age several years ago, was the last of the hostile aborigines. He wore the aboriginal dress, of beaded leggings, hunting shirt, and red bandanna handkerchief. He spoke his native tongue and when in liquor it was his custom to boast of the men, women and children he had scalped in the Indian wars.

A member of Colbert's family was killed several years ago by John Roland, another Indian. Roland, after serving five years in the penitentiary, was pardoned by the Governor of Alabama a few months ago.

The Indian people who live on the Escambia side of Little River and who have most of Indian blood in them are not held in the highest esteem by their white neighbors. It is said of them while they may have forgotten some of the better qualities of their ancestors they have kept alive the old custom of letting the women do the work and they have learned to love the white man's whiskey without restraint. Of all of them this is not said, but there are enough of them of whom it is said to be true to almost make the indictment against them general.

These Alabama Indians have many relatives in the Indian Territory and they are constantly exchanging visits. A few of the Alabama Indians have interest in the law suits which are pending to recover from the United States money which is claimed for the slaves of Indians.

The visitor through the Indian country is impressed with the fact that he finds no Indian at the head of any notable business enterprise or in control of any large planting or farming industry. The resourcefulness, the pertinacity of the white man, his love of meeting, grappling and overcoming obstacles are not the characteristics of the red men.



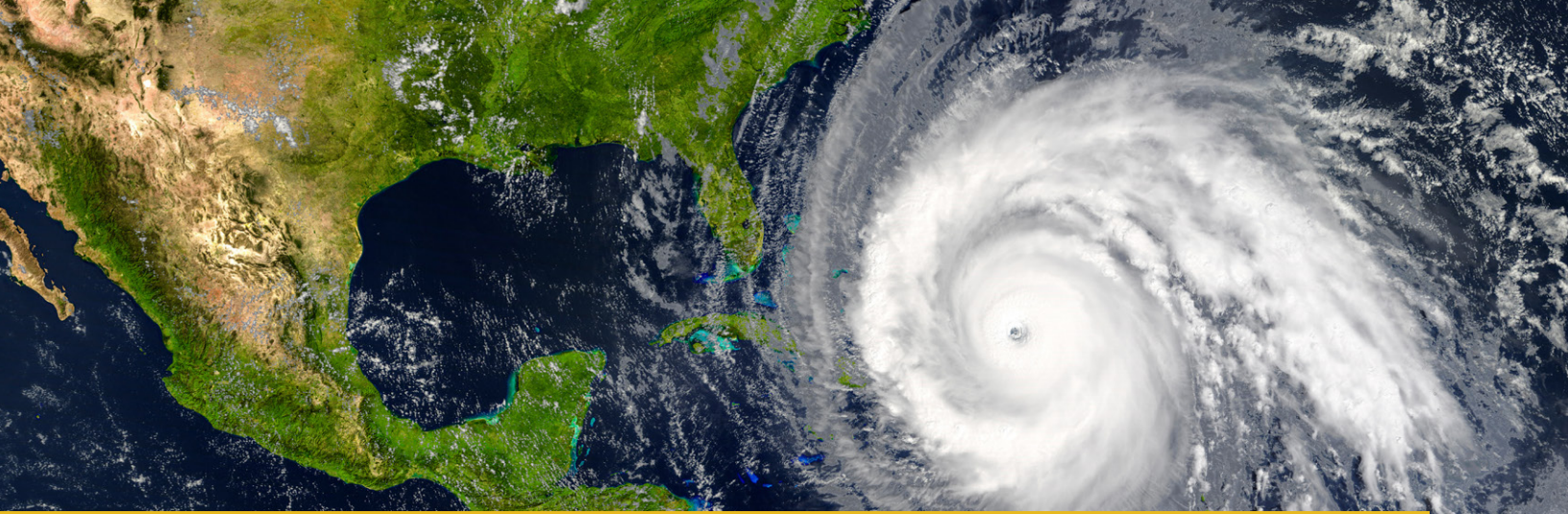
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PREPARE BEFORE HURRICANE SEASON

From NOAA.gov

T

he Atlantic and central Pacific hurricane season (includes Hawaii) officially runs June 1 through November 30. The eastern Pacific hurricane season runs from May 15 to November 30.

However, the best time to prepare is well before the official start of the season. Avoid having to rush through potentially life-saving preparations by waiting until it's too late. Get your disaster supplies while the shelves are still stocked, and get that insurance checkup early, as flood insurance requires a 30-day waiting period.

DEVELOP AN EVACUATION PLAN

If you are at risk from hurricane impacts, you need an evacuation plan. Now is the time to begin planning where you would go and how you would get there. You do not need to travel hundreds of miles. Your destination could be a friend or relative who lives in a well built home outside flood prone areas. Plan several routes. Be sure to account for your pets.

If you don't have a vehicle, check with local officials to see what transportation options they may have available.

ASSEMBLE DISASTER SUPPLIES

Whether you're evacuating or sheltering-in-place, you're going to need supplies not just to get through the storm but for the potentially lengthy and unpleasant aftermath. Have enough non-perishable food, water and medicine to last each person in your family a minimum of 3 days (store a longer than 3-day supply of water, if possible). Electricity and water could be out for weeks. You'll need extra cash, a battery-powered radio and flashlights. You may need a portable crank or solar-powered USB charger for your cell phones. And lastly, don't forget your pets!

GET AN INSURANCE CHECKUP & DOCUMENT YOUR POSSESSIONS

Call your insurance company or agent and ask for an insurance check-up to make sure you have enough insurance to repair or even replace your home and/or belongings. Remember, home and renters insurance doesn't cover flooding, so you'll need a separate policy for it. Flood insurance is available through your company, agent, or the National Flood Insurance Program at [floodsmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov). Act now, as flood insurance requires a 30-day waiting period.

Take the time before hurricane season begins to document your possessions: photos, serial numbers, or anything else that you may need to provide your insurance company when filing a claim.

CREATE A COMMUNICATION PLAN

Take the time now to write down your hurricane plan, and share it with your family. Determine family meeting places, and make sure to include an out-of-town location in case of evacuation. Write down on paper a list of emergency contacts, and make sure to include utilities and other critical services — remember, the internet may not be accessible during or after a storm.

STRENGTHEN YOUR HOME

Now is the time to improve your home's ability to withstand hurricane impacts. Trim trees. Install storm shutters, accordion shutters, and/or impact glass. Seal outside wall openings. Remember, the garage door is the most vulnerable part of the home, so it must be able to withstand hurricane-force winds. Many retrofits are not as costly or time consuming as you may think. If you're a renter, work with your landlord now to prepare for a storm.

And remember - now is the time to purchase the proper plywood, steel or aluminum panels to have on hand if you need to board up the windows and doors ahead of an approaching storm.

NEW BILL ASKS CDC FOR TRIBAL SET ASIDE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

By Elyse Wild for Native News Online, Published July 28, 2026

Under a newly introduced bill, tribes could get a cut of public health emergency funding.



DEVELOP AN EVACUATION PLAN



ASSEMBLE DISASTER SUPPLIES:

food, water, batteries, charger, radio, cash



GET AN INSURANCE CHECKUP

and document your possessions



CREATE A COMMUNICATION PLAN

with a hand-written list of contacts



STRENGTHEN YOUR HOME

For more information,
scan the QR code.



A new bill would require the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to include tribes in funding for public health emergencies.

The CDC Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act aims to update the CDC's public health emergency grant program to include tribal governments and tribal organizations alongside state and local entities. It was introduced last week by Rep. Melanie A Stansbury (D-NM) and is co-sponsored by Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM).

The bill raises authorized funds from \$685 million to \$750 million, 5% of which must be distributed to Native communities. It requires at least 10 cooperative agreements with tribes, with minimum award amounts determined through tribal consultation. While state and local entities typically have to match funds, that requirement is waived for tribes and tribal organizations. The bill also stipulates no spending deadline for the funds, meaning they can be deployed per the tribal recipients' timeline.

The bill states that the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services may alter program rules to better work for tribal entities.

The bill also requires HHS to consult with tribes on program designs that affect them.

Within two years of the program's implementation, HHS and its agency, IHS, must submit a report to Senate and House subcommittees detailing the program's launch, challenges, a detailed breakdown of tribal applicants and recipients, waivers granted, and recommendations for improvements and analysis of Tribal public health emergency infrastructure limitations.



ELYSE WILD

Senior Health Editor for
Native News Online

Elyse Wild is Senior Health Editor for Native News Online, where she leads coverage of health equity issues including mental health, environmental health, maternal mortality, and the overdose crisis in Indian Country. Her award-winning journalism has appeared in The Guardian, McClatchy newspapers, and NPR affiliates. In 2024, she received the inaugural Excellence in Recovery Journalism Award for her solutions-focused reporting on addiction and recovery in Native communities. She is currently working on a Pulitzer Center-funded series exploring cultural approaches to addiction treatment.



SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

HONORING OUR STRENGTH, PROTECTING OUR PEOPLE

By Danielle Sanspree

While the statistics are troubling, they do not tell the whole story... [It] reminds us of the importance of supporting one another and ensuring that prevention and mental health resources reflect the cultural strengths, traditions, and values that have sustained our people for generations.

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uicide remains a serious public health issue in Indian Country. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people experience disproportionately high suicide rates compared with other racial and ethnic groups in the United States.

The CDC reports that suicide rates among non-Hispanic AI/AN populations increased nearly 20% between 2015 and 2020. [cdc.gov] The National Indian Health Board notes that American Indians and Alaska Natives had the highest age-adjusted suicide rate of any racial or ethnic group in 2022. [nihb.org]

While the statistics are troubling, they do not tell the whole story. Behind these numbers are our relatives, friends, and loved ones. This reality reminds us of the importance of supporting one another and ensuring that prevention and mental health resources reflect the cultural strengths, traditions, and values that have sustained our people for generations. The Indian Health Service (IHS) identifies cultural identity, a strong connection to Tribal traditions, family support, and a sense of belonging as important factors that can protect Native youth and adults from suicidal behavior.

As a Tribal community, we have always relied on one another through times of hardship and healing. Suicide Prevention Month is an opportunity to strengthen that tradition of mutual care by encouraging open conversations about mental health and emotional well-being. Many individuals who are experiencing emotional pain may feel isolated or believe they must carry their burdens alone. A simple conversation, a listening ear, or a reminder that someone is valued can make a powerful difference.

Recognizing these warning signs and reaching out with compassion can make a life-saving difference. Every member of our community is valued, and every life carries meaning and purpose. Suicide is preventable, and no one must face their struggles alone.

If you or someone you know is struggling, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call or text: 988

The service is free, confidential, and connects individuals with trained crisis counselors.



WARNING SIGNS MAY INCLUDE



TALKING ABOUT
WANTING TO DIE OR
FEELING HOPELESS



WITHDRAWAL FROM
FAMILY, FRIENDS, OR
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES



SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN
MOOD OR BEHAVIOR



INCREASED USE OF
ALCOHOL OR DRUGS



GIVING AWAY
POSSESSIONS OR SAYING
GOODBYE TO LOVED ONES



EXPRESSING FEELINGS
OF BEING A BURDEN
TO OTHERS

*For help, contact the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.
Call or text 988.*

Source samhsa.gov



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Native Helpline

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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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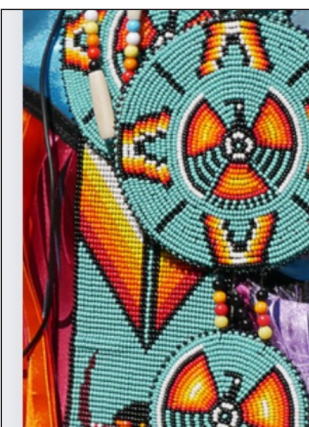
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A WORLD CLASS
DESTINATION BY



JIM THORPE: LIT BY LIGHTNING

By Sharon Delmar

GENRE Documentary, Sports, Biography

RATED TV-PG

RUNTIME 1 hr. 26 min.

Few athletes have left a legacy quite like Jim Thorpe. *Jim Thorpe: Lit by Lightning* explores the remarkable life of the Native American athlete who became an Olympic champion and excelled across multiple sports, including football, baseball and basketball.

Directed by Cheyenne and Arapaho filmmaker Chris Eyre, the documentary goes beyond Thorpe's athletic accomplishments to examine his identity, the obstacles he faced as a Native American and his enduring place in American history. Through historical footage, Thorpe's own words, and perspectives from Native scholars, historians, athletes and sports commentators, the film introduces viewers to both the celebrated athlete and the man behind the legend.

WHY WATCH?

- Discover the extraordinary story of one of the greatest all-around athletes in American history.
- Learn about Thorpe's experiences as a Native American navigating sports and society during the early 20th century.
- Hear Native perspectives on his life, accomplishments and lasting legacy.
- Explore the intersection of Native identity, American history and sports through the work of acclaimed Native filmmaker Chris Eyre.
- A great choice for sports fans, history enthusiasts and anyone interested in learning more about influential Native figures.

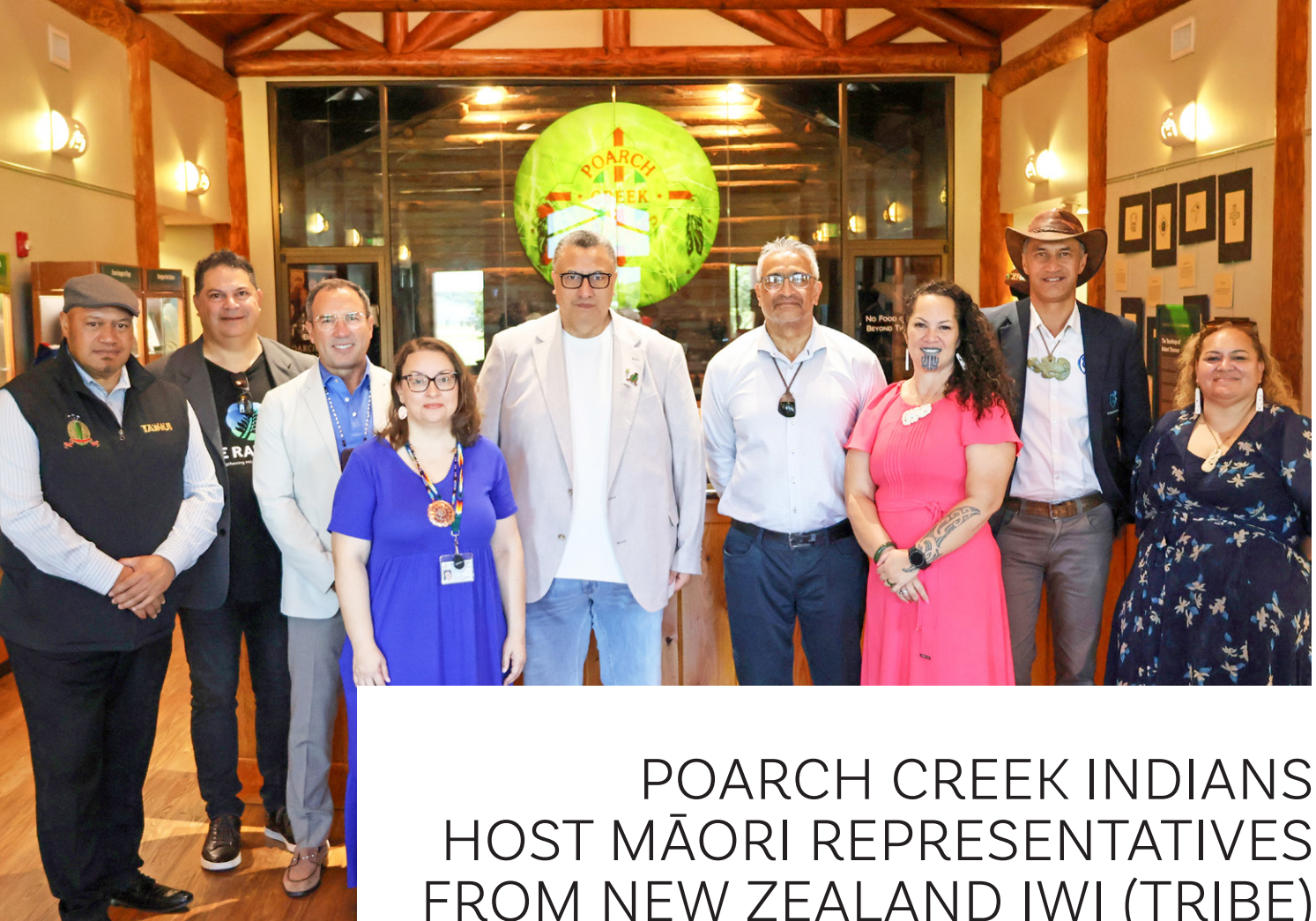
WHERE TO WATCH

Netflix; also available through the History Channel and select streaming services.

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

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





POARCH CREEK INDIANS HOST MĀORI REPRESENTATIVES FROM NEW ZEALAND IWI (TRIBE)

By Caleb Davis, PCI Government & Public Affairs Intern

The Poarch Creek Indians (PCI) welcomed representatives of the Māori iwi of New Zealand for a visit to the reservation in Atmore, Alabama as part of a cultural and leadership exchange. During the two-day visit, the delegation enjoyed discussions with Poarch Creek Tribal Council leaders to learn about the Tribes path to sovereignty, self-governance and the strategies that have contributed to Poarch Creek's success.

The group enjoyed an extensive tour of the Tribal Reservation including the Museum & Welcome Center, Community Center, Environmental Department, Health Department, Lavan Martin Assisted Living Facility, Fire Department and Wind Creek Casino Atmore.

The tour began at the Poarch Creek Museum, where Vice Chair Robbie McGhee welcomed the guests and provided an overview of the Tribes history. Andrea McGhee, the Museum Technician, and Billy Bailey, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, then led a tour of the museum. During the visit, two Māori representatives joined McGhee and Bailey in a stickball demonstration. Stickball, formerly known as "Little Brother of War", was a game that was

played by Creeks in order to prevent an all-out war between tribes. Today, the game is still played socially.

While at the museum, Māori representatives shared stories of challenges similar to those faced by PCI, including colonization, cultural loss, and struggles with government policies.

At the Poarch Creek Community Center, Danielle Balaban, Community Services Administrative Assistant, led the first portion of the tour through classrooms and community spaces. Justin Rolin, Cultural Education Coordinator, guided the second half of the tour, highlighting the cultural components of the center and how they engage with Tribal Citizens by teaching traditional Creek practices.

One stop during the tour focused on how the Muscogee language is taught in classrooms. During the discussion, Māori representatives shared their experiences revitalizing and preserving their own language.

On the second day, the delegation visited the Buford L. Rolin Health Clinic, where Kelly Dirting, Health & Human Services Division Director, and Dr. Semple led a tour of the facility. They showcased the clinic's advanced technology and discussed its history, future plans, and ongoing challenges.



“ This time together reminds us all that although we may be separated by oceans and miles, cultural exchanges with other Indigenous Tribes like the Māori, connect us all back together. ”



Following the clinic visit, Martha Gookin, Elder Services Division Director, led a tour of the Lavan Martin Assisted Living Facility. Gookin highlighted the services available to Tribal Elders, including health care, housing and nutrition programs.

During the tour, a resident spoke with several Māori representatives and later presented one of his handmade woven baskets as a gift. In return, the visitors presented him with a pāua shell from New Zealand. Paua Shells are large, edible snails known for having the most vibrant and colorful shells in the world.

The delegation later enjoyed Indian tacos for lunch at the SAIL Center.

Members of the Poarch Creek Fire Department then led a tour of Fire Station #1, explaining how the department has grown from a small operation 40 years ago into its current organization. Representatives expressed particular interest in both the Fire Department and Health Clinic, noting the challenges many Māori communities face in accessing health care and emergency services.

While at the fire station, the Māori visitors taught and performed a haka for the Fire Department members. The haka is a traditional Māori ceremonial dance that

historically was performed before battle. Today, it serves as an expression of cultural pride, unity and strength. Haka performances feature synchronized chanting, hand movements, stomping and expressive facial gestures.

This time together reminds us all that although we may be separated by oceans and miles, cultural exchanges with other Indigenous Tribes like the Māori, connect us all back together.

Having the opportunity to follow this tour and witness the exchange of cultures and histories firsthand was truly remarkable. It was especially meaningful to hear about the shared challenges the Tribe faces with other Indigenous communities, even if they are on the other side of the globe. I was able to see how exchanges like these can create valuable opportunities for mutual learning and getting insights from others' experiences through their approaches and outcomes. My internship through the Advanced Career Development Program made this experience possible, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of it.

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MARK CRUZ CONFIRMED TO LEAD IHS

Indian Health Service Will Have A Director After Nearly 19 Months Without One

By Jourdan Bennett-Begaye for lictnews.org, Introduction by Kim Philyaw



PICTURED U.S. Representative Tom Cole, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee & IHS Director Mark Cruz

C

ongratulations to Mark Cruz of the Klamath Tribes on his confirmation as the new Director of the Indian Health Service! The U.S. Senate confirmed Cruz in a 51-47 vote Friday, August 7, ending nearly 19 months without permanent leadership at an agency that provides health care to approximately 2.8 million American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Cruz brings firsthand experience navigating federal health policy at the highest levels, having previously served as one of the most senior Native officials within HHS. We look forward to seeing what his leadership means for Tribal communities across the country.

The U.S. Senate officially confirmed Mark Cruz to be the next Indian Health Service director under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Friday.

Cruz, Klamath Tribes, was one of 74 Trump nominations confirmed in a 51-47 Senate vote before leaving town and returning in September.

The White House nominated Cruz in early June for a four-year term. He testified in front of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs June 24.

The IHS director role has had two acting directors since former IHS Director Roselyn Tso, Navajo, resigned January 17, 2025. Benjamin Smith, Navajo, and Clayton Fulton, Cherokee, both temporarily took on the director responsibilities and duties.

Before Cruz's nomination, he served as senior advisor in the Immediate Office of the Secretary in the Department of Health and Human Services under Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Cruz stated in his June testimony.

He also said that if he was confirmed, he would work to improve care for tribes and Native people, including advance appropriations, reducing the staff vacancy rate, modernizing the electronic health record systems, improving purchased/referred care, and more.

"My vision for the Indian Health Service aligns with the President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request," he told the Indian affairs committee.

"I firmly believe that tribal consultation is a process, not an event. Tribal leaders and Congress can count on me to engage early, listen carefully, and be transparent. I am realistic about the challenges but optimistic about what we can achieve together," he testified. "With strong federal, tribal, and urban Indian health partners, outcomes will continue to improve. We see this in the return to traditional first foods, Secretary Kennedy's work to address chronic disease, the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, and ongoing efforts against Alzheimer's, liver disease, cancer, kidney disease, and other conditions that disproportionately affect our people."

Cruz has a master's degree in urban education policy from Brown University and a bachelor's degree in political science from Pepperdine University.

He previously served as deputy assistant secretary for policy and economic development for Indian affairs at the U.S. Department of Interior and worked for former Republican Rep. Todd Rokita of Indiana and Republican Rep. Tom Cole, Chickasaw, of Oklahoma.

Cruz has also worked for the Oregon House Republican Caucus and was an aide for the U.S. Department of Education.

The IHS director oversees that comprehensive health care is provided to approximately 2.8 million American Indians and Alaska Natives from 575 federally recognized tribes as part of the treaty and trust responsibilities from the United States federal government.

S U P P O R T G R O U P

Freedom Within

B E C A U S E I T S T A R T S I N S I D E

Peer-Led Addiction & Mental Health Support Group

Group Overview

Freedom Within is a safe space for healing, recovery, and transformation. We meet you where you are. You are not defined by what happened to you or where you have been. You are defined by where you are going and who you chose to become.

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You do not have to wait for perfect circumstances or for doors to open. Freedom begins now, within you. We grow through what we are going through.

What We Believe

Addiction is a response to pain, not a sign of weakness. Healing happens when we address what is underneath

Progress matters more than perfection. Grace is greater than shame. We heal in connection and practice hope.

Peer-Led Facilitation

Peer facilitated by a person in long term recovery who understands cravings, relapse, legal pressure, coping after trauma, and starting over.

Connection is a core part of recovery. Peer support helps recovery grow.

Group Details

Day and Time: EVERY Friday at 4:00 PM

Location:

5811 Jack Springs Road

Atmore, Alabama 36502

Building 300 (Group Meeting Room)

.....

For More Information

Facilitator: Elaine Sells, Recovery Advocate

Phone: 251-294-3258

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EIGHT YEARS OF GIVING BACK

POARCH CREEK INDIANS AND MAGIC MOMENTS CONTINUE MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIP AT OWA

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

The partnership between Magic Moments and the Poarch Creek Indians continues to make a lasting impact on families across Alabama, bringing joy, support and unforgettable experiences to children facing serious medical challenges.

That commitment was on full display during the 8th Annual Magic Moments Day at OWA Parks & Resort, where 61 Magic Moments families, representing 275 participants from across the state, gathered for a day of fun, connection and celebration. The event, part of Magic Moments' Beyond the Moment program, allows wish families to reconnect and build relationships long after their original wish experience.

For eight years, OWA Parks & Resort, owned and operated by the Poarch Creek Indians, has partnered with Magic Moments to host the annual event. What began with just over 100 participants has grown into one of the organization's most anticipated gatherings, welcoming more and more guests each year.

Magic Moments is Alabama's only wish-granting organization dedicated exclusively to children living with chronic life-threatening and acute life-altering medical

conditions. Since its founding in 1984, the nonprofit has granted more than 5,000 wishes to children in all 67 Alabama counties.

"Hosting Magic Moments Day each year is one of the most meaningful traditions at OWA, and reminds us why we do what we do," said Ashley Darby, Director of Marketing, OWA Parks & Resort. "This day is about more than rides and attractions. It's about bringing families together, creating meaningful experiences, and showing children and their loved ones that an entire community stands behind them. We are honored to continue this partnership with Magic Moments and to help create memories that will last a lifetime."

Throughout the day, families enjoyed OWA's rides, attractions and entertainment while spending quality time together in an environment free from the daily stresses often associated with medical treatments and appointments.

The Beyond the Moment program is designed to extend the impact of a wish beyond a single experience, creating opportunities for families to stay connected and build lasting relationships. Organizers say partnerships like the one with OWA and the Poarch Creek Indians help ensure those opportunities continue to grow.



“These days are about more than just a moment of joy, they’re about lasting memories and real hope.”

**LOGAN SHARMAN, MAGIC MOMENTS
SOUTH ALABAMA DIRECTOR**

“Thanks to the generosity of Poarch Creek Indians and OWA Parks & Resort, we’re able to continue showing these children and their families that they are supported and celebrated by giving them moments they’ll never forget,” said Logan Sharman, Magic Moments South Alabama Director. “These days are about more than just a moment of joy, they’re about lasting memories and real hope.”

This annual event reflects the ongoing commitment of OWA Parks & Resort and other businesses of Poarch Creek Indians, to investing in the communities they serve and supporting organizations that make a lasting impact. More than a partnership, it represents a shared mission with Magic Moments to strengthen communities, support families, and create meaningful experiences for children facing extraordinary challenges.

As attendance continues to grow each year, both organizations remain committed to ensuring Alabama families have opportunities to celebrate, connect and create memories that last far beyond a single day at OWA.





ROOTED IN PURPOSE, BUILT FOR GROWTH

LASTING LESSONS FROM THE POARCH CREEK INDIANS

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

Alabama is home to the Poarch Creek Indians, a Tribe rooted in generations of history and focused on building a stronger future for the community and the state. The Tribe continues their focus to honor what they stand for: preserving their past and securing their future while building businesses that create jobs and drive growth across Alabama.

These are the lessons Leadership Alabama members and their emerging leaders group, the Alabama Leadership Initiative (ALI), wanted to experience firsthand, in the field, from the people doing the work.

Ashley Kaplan, executive director of Leadership Alabama, knew business site visits were a fit for her members.

TWO VISITS. ONE LASTING IMPRESSION

First came a trip to the reservation. It was here that the Leadership Alabama group began to understand the Tribe's story and how their drive led to creating successful businesses across the state and the country. They walked the grounds, talked with Tribal leaders, and saw what's possible when purpose drives business.

"As Alabama's only federally recognized Indian Tribe, we have a unique government-to-government relationship with the State and we have an important place in Alabama's history. Our history has given us a deep understanding of the importance of creating economic opportunities, and our businesses are an extension of who we are as a people. As we diversify and expand our business offerings, we

have continued to maintain a focus on what we can do to improve the quality of life for folks in communities across Alabama," said Stephanie Bryan, Poarch Creek Indians Tribal Chair & CEO.

The ALI class also toured OWA Parks & Resort, which is owned and operated by the Poarch Creek Indians. They were struck by the scale, the attention to detail, and the efforts of the countless people who make it all happen every day.

Kaplan put it simply: "Being able to see something in our state that is preserving its culture, as well as how it impacts growth throughout the state, that is what we want our members to take away."

LESSONS AHEAD

Bryan serves on Leadership Alabama's board and sees the collaboration between PCI and Leadership Alabama as a bridge to the future. "We believe that the strong professional relationships and true friendships we have developed with the great people at Leadership Alabama will have a lasting positive impact on our State," said Bryan. "This special partnership offers opportunities to use our collective knowhow to find new avenues for growing our economy, creating jobs, and encouraging good companies to make significant investments in Alabama. We are excited about our work ahead."

For both Leadership Alabama and ALI members, the visits were an eye-opening view of signature successes right in their own backyard.



WIND CREEK CHICAGO-SOUTHLAND SPONSORS PAPA HOPS CHARITY SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

By Amelia Tognoli

Wind Creek Chicago Southland was proud to serve as the Championship Sponsor of this year's Papa Hops Charity Softball Tournament. Recognized as one of Chicago's premier annual 16-inch softball tournaments, the event is a beloved community tradition held on the city's South Side. The tournament honors the life and legacy of Tom "Papa Hops" Hopkins, a cherished community member who passed away after battling melanoma. Following his passing in 2014, his family established the Tom Hopkins Foundation to continue his passion for helping others.

"I've supported the Papa Hops event as an individual for years because of the incredible work it does to support families devastated by cancer. Being able to introduce it to my Wind Creek family this year made it even more meaningful," said Pat Munley, Director of Facilities at Wind Creek Chicago Southland. "We're already looking forward to supporting Papa Hops again next year."

The tournament raises funds to assist local families facing cancer by helping ease the financial burden of treatment-related expenses. It also supports youth athletics, with a special focus on athletic programs at Catholic grade schools throughout Chicago's South Side. Since its inception, the Papa Hops Charity Softball Tournament has raised more than \$850,000, providing meaningful support to dozens of families and numerous school athletic programs. Wind Creek Chicago Southland is honored to partner with organizations like the Tom Hopkins Foundation that strengthen communities and make a lasting impact on the lives of others.

"I've supported the Papa Hops event as an individual for years because of the incredible work it does to support families devastated by cancer. ...my Wind Creek family this year made it even more meaningful."

**PAT MUNLEY,
DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES
AT WIND CREEK
CHICAGO SOUTHLAND**



KEEP THE GOOD TIMES GOING THIS SEPTEMBER AT OWA PARKS & RESORT

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez



A

s summer winds down, the fun is just heating up at OWA Parks & Resort! September is packed with unforgettable entertainment and family-friendly events that make it the perfect time to visit. Whether you're chasing thrills, making memories, or simply soaking up the last days of the season, there's still plenty to experience all month long.

TROPIC FALLS AT OWA

The fun is still going strong at Tropic Falls this September. Open Saturdays and Sundays throughout the month, it's the perfect weekend destination for families looking to keep the adventure going. Make a splash at the region's largest indoor water park, where towering water slides, a relaxing lazy river beneath the convertible glass roof, and the surf-inspired wave pool offer fun for every age. Then head next door to Tropic Falls Theme Park, where 23 exciting rides and classic midway games keep the thrills going all day long. Whether you're planning one last splash of summer or kicking off a new season of family adventures, Tropic Falls is the place to make unforgettable weekend memories.

STARS, STRIPES & SUMMER NIGHTS

Labor Day Weekend at OWA | September 5-7

Labor Day Weekend isn't the end of summer, it's another great reason to gather with family and friends for tropical fun, special activities, and entertainment throughout the resort. Kick off the fun on September 5th, and the fun continues all weekend long with a full line-up of family-friendly fun, games, activities and live music each night from 4:00 - 10:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4TH

4pm - 5:30pm	Kris Dewberry
6pm - 7:30pm	Blake Lambert
8pm - 10pm	Matt Koziol

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5TH

4pm - 5:30pm	Marissa Luna (from American Idol)
6pm - 7:30pm	Back Country Boys
8pm - 10pm	Clay Barker

**Check out our website for an updated listing of events.*

FBC CAR SHOW

September 5

Car enthusiasts won't want to miss the Car Show presented by OWA and First Baptist Church of Foley. This high-horsepower event brings together an incredible collection of classic, custom, antique, and modern vehicles, making it a must-see for automotive fans of all ages.

FOLEY HEAVY EQUIPMENT RODEO

September 25

Crews from Foley, Gulf Shores, and Orange Beach will compete in this fun event at OWA. Competitions included balancing a bowling ball with a skid-steer, maneuvering bulldozers, and using an excavator boom to putt oversized balls, and much more! You've got to see it to believe it!

PRIMAL FEAR HAUNTED MAZE OPENING NIGHT

September 25

Join us for haunts and thrills as we kick off our Halloween Haunted Maze with the opening Primal Fear. Open on weekends through October 31st.

OWA THEATER

All month long, live entertainment takes center stage at the OWA Theater with an exciting lineup of performances. Kick off the month on **September 4** with **An Evening with Pam Tillis**. Then, on **September 16**, experience the soulful sounds of **MT Jones**, a rising British singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist from Liverpool, England, whose music blends the timeless soul of the 1960s and 1970s with modern R&B and jazz influences. Get ready to laugh on **September 18** at **Right Side of Comedy**, featuring the Gulf of America Tour hosted by the hilarious Jesse Peyton and Kenny Webster. The entertainment continues on **September 19** with **Use Your Illusion**, America's premier Guns N' Roses tribute experience, delivering all the energy and iconic hits fans know and love.

No matter how you choose to spend your September, OWA Parks & Resort is the place to make the most of every weekend. From thrilling rides and water-filled adventures to live entertainment, family-friendly events, and unforgettable experiences, there's always something new to discover. Gather your family and friends, plan your next visit, and keep the good times rolling all month long. We can't wait to see you at OWA this September!

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

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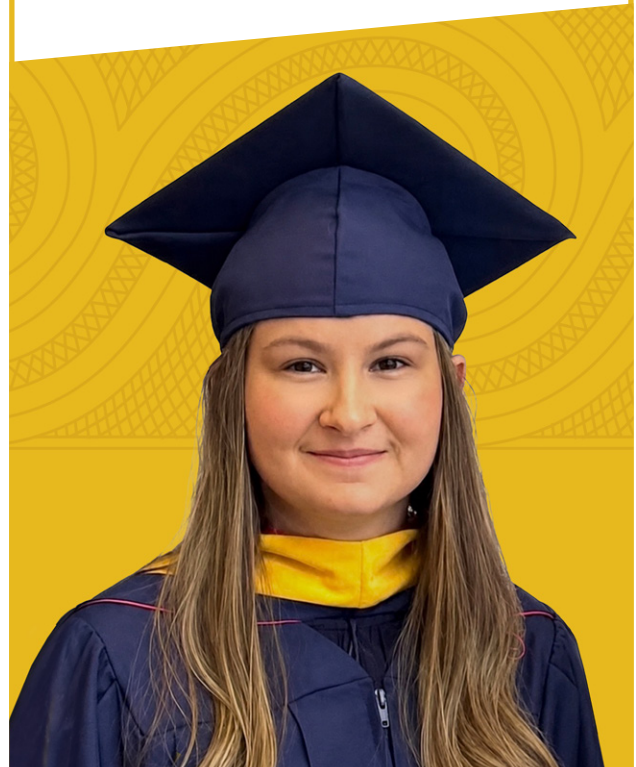
Submitted by Michelle Moree Pezent

Congratulations to tribal member Rachael Maria Gregson for receiving her Master's degree from USA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Chi Sigma Iota (Upsilon Sigma Alpha chapter)! She has passed the NCE as well as completing 600 hours of clinical internship. A previous Graduate of the University of Mobile with a Bachelor's of Science degree (Honors) in Psychology. Her heart is set on the youth and her family couldn't be prouder! She is the daughter of Michelle (John) Pezent and Tim (Meagan) Gregson—along with her siblings.

“

*We love you, Rachael.
God bless and keep you!*

ROMANS 12:21





COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027

Escambia County Board of Education today announced its policy for free and reduced-price meals for children served in schools under the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program. For School Year 2026-2027 Escambia County will continue participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). No further action is required of you. This USDA provision allows your child(ren) to participate in the school meal programs without having to pay a fee or submit a meal application.

CEP is a key provision of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, which allows schools and school districts in low-income areas to eliminate school meal applications and serve breakfast and lunch at no charge to all enrolled students. CEP gives food service professionals more time to focus on preparing nutritious meals that their students will enjoy and gives students more time to eat those meals by cutting down on time spent in the lunch line. More importantly, by offering all students a nutritious breakfast and lunch at no cost, CEP helps ensure more students come to class well-nourished and ready to learn.

Children need healthy meals to learn. Escambia County offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast and lunch meals will follow the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines for healthy school meals, so please encourage students to participate. "In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age or disability." Parents or guardians who need further information may contact:

Laura Bailey,
Child Nutrition Program Director
251-368-8979 Ext. 2407
laura.bailey@escoschools.net

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found on line at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

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3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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COMPETITION: COLLABORATION AND CONFLICT

By Aya Prince

Hesci, all, and welcome to fall! As we talked about last month, I hope balancing your many commitments is going smoothly. It can be daunting at times to rejoin the fray after periods of relaxation. Regardless, I have no doubt in all of our ability to do so. Changing seasons means new development and growth. This can be mental, physical, emotional, or even spiritual, depending on how we progress as individuals. Remember that there are resources to support you when undergoing these shifts. But, speaking of shifts, let's turn to the cultural spotlight for September: sports!

In Indigenous communities and our world today, sports bridge the gap between competition and collaboration, effort and fun. Soccer, for example, united communities across the globe for the World Cup, which ended in mid-late July. However, we often fail to honor the origins of these games. Many stem from Native American traditions. The earliest known sport in American history, lacrosse, was played by the Iroquois people in 1100, with up to 1,000 participants in a boundless field. It connected social circles, it settled major disputes, and it prepared tribes for war. Ceremonial and medicinal games are still played to this day. Another key sport is Indian relay horse racing, favored by the Shoshone. Originating nearly 760 years after lacrosse, this horse racing continues to gain traction, with a competition in 2024 welcoming over 20 teams. Finally, of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention stickball. Our own Tribe hosted stickball games at the 2026 Southeastern Indian Festival in April. The game, played by our ancestors, was commonly called "the little brother of war" due to the ferocity and intensity shown by both sides.

The Word of the Month is...

AFVCKETV : STICKBALL

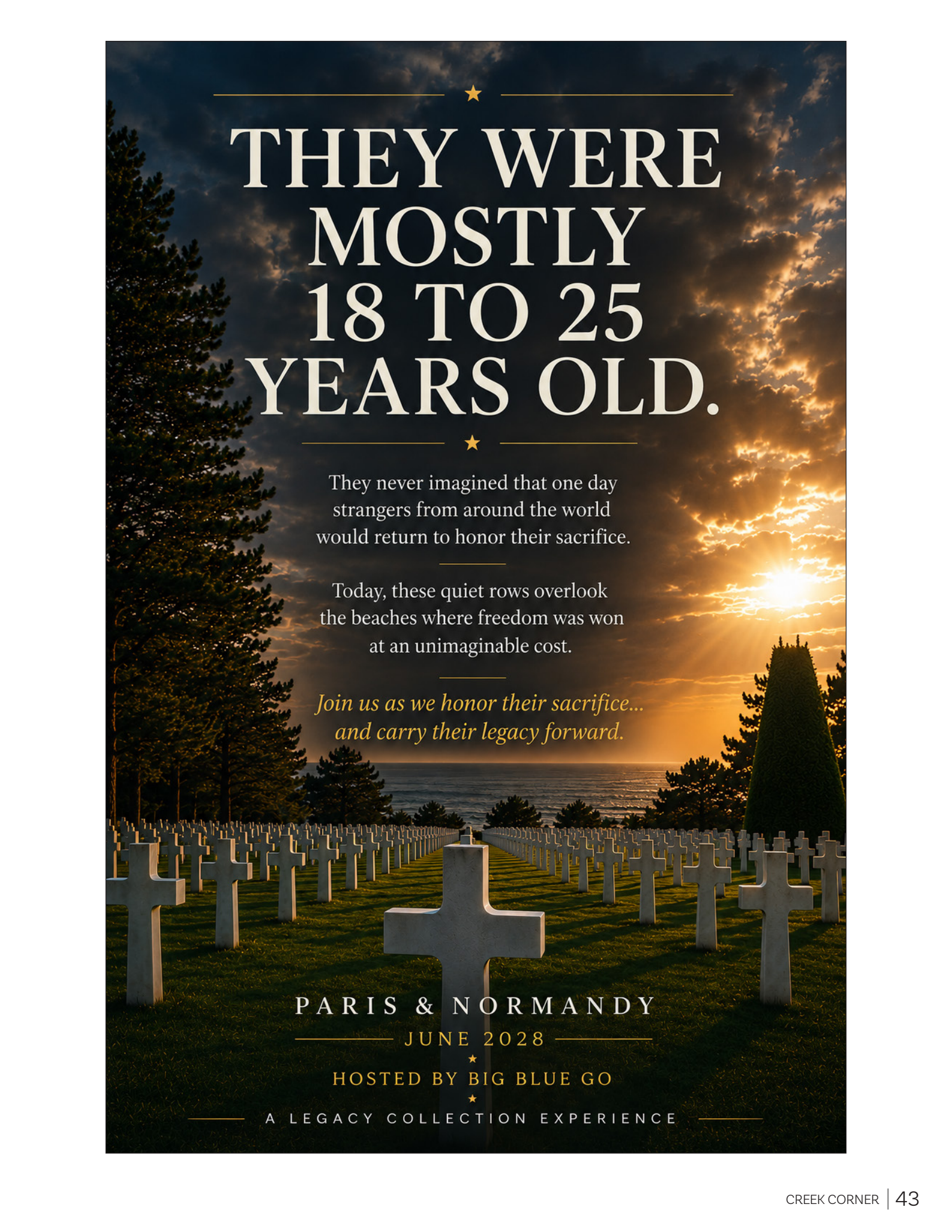
Stickball not only built the strength and fighting prowess of our ancestors, but also engaged them in our community. According to researcher Sandra Busatta, afvcketv, or stickball, brought people together by literally laying their lives on the line for one another. Fatalities were not frequent; however, they did occur. Such was the nature of the sport. And while it was dangerous, it was also fun. Afvcketv can be used as either a noun or a verb—in its verb form, it connotes delight and amusement. Happiness. That is another reason why sometimes, social stickball games were (and are) held. They are just for the joy of the players.

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

A photograph of a cemetery with rows of white crosses. The sky is a dramatic sunset with orange and yellow light breaking through dark clouds. The sun is visible on the right side of the horizon. The crosses are arranged in neat rows, receding into the distance. The overall mood is solemn and reflective.

★ THEY WERE MOSTLY 18 TO 25 YEARS OLD.

They never imagined that one day
strangers from around the world
would return to honor their sacrifice.

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the beaches where freedom was won
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*Join us as we honor their sacrifice...
and carry their legacy forward.*

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CREEK CORNER

SEPTEMBER 2026 IMPORTANT DATES

- | | | |
|-------------|--|--------------------------|
| 9.1 | SUBMISSION DEADLINE October Issue | |
| 9.3 | TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers | 4:00 PM |
| 9.4 | FAMILY COURT Tribal Courtroom | 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM |
| 9.7 | TRIBAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES CLOSED Labor Day | |
| 9.8 | TRIBAL COURT Tribal Courtroom | 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM |
| 9.17 | TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers | 4:00 PM |
| 9.18 | FAMILY COURT Tribal Courtroom | 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM |
| 9.18 | FRED L. MCGHEE EARLY LEARNING CENTER CLOSED
Staff Professional Development | |
| 9.22 | TRIBAL COURT Tribal Courtroom | 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM |
| 9.29 | HOUSING FAIR Poarch Creek Community Center | 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM |

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.