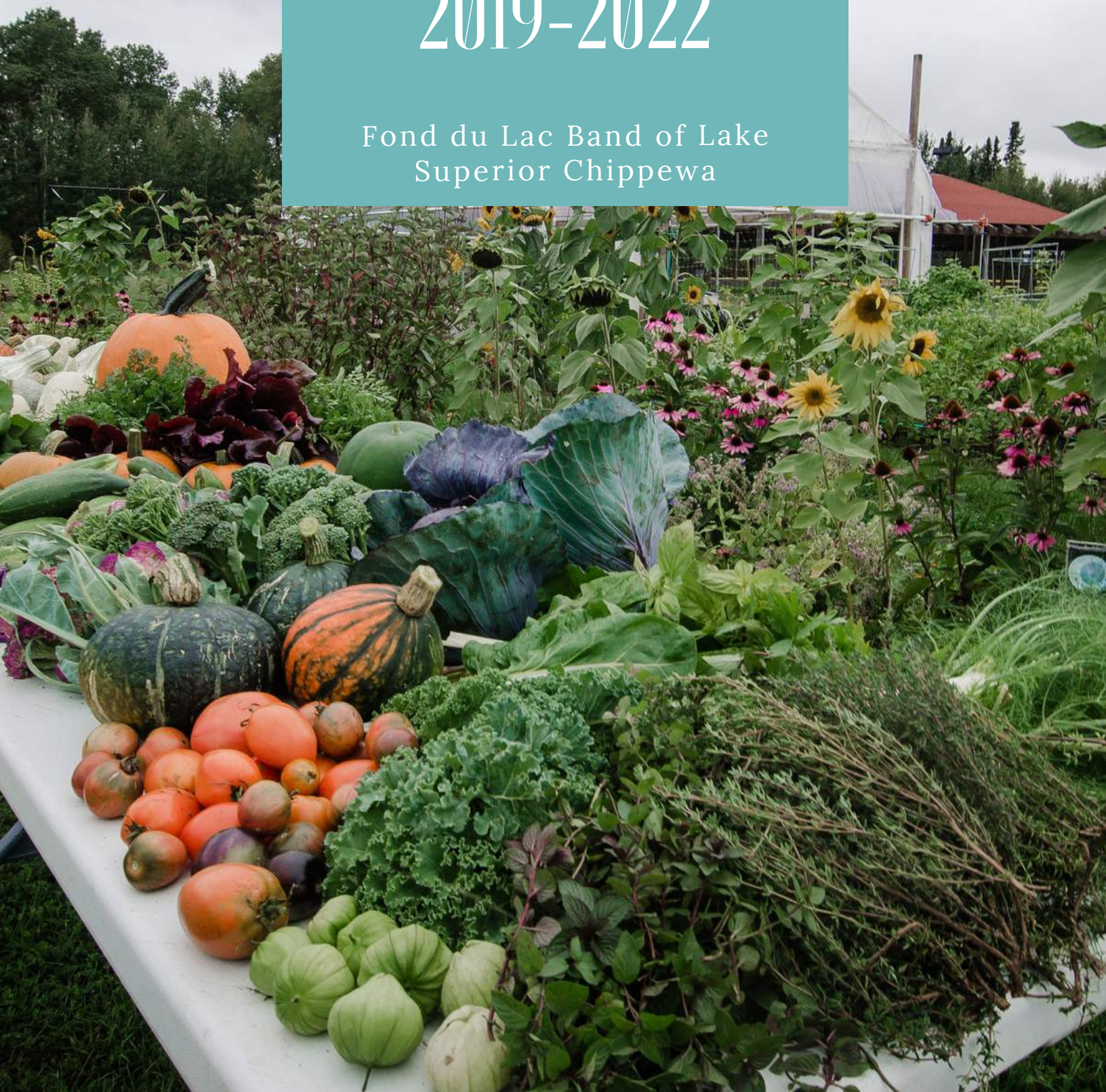


# FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ASSESSMENT 2019-2022

Fond du Lac Band of Lake  
Superior Chippewa



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thank you to the following people/organizations for their contributions:

Food Sovereignty Committee

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Mirja Hanson

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Kara Stoneburner

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"Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations".

-Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty, "Nyéléni," 2007

# Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation Business Committee

1720 Big Lake Rd.  
Cloquet, MN 55720  
Phone (218) 879-4593  
Fax (218) 879-4146

RESOLUTION # 1135/22

## Resolution to Adopt the Fond du Lac Reservation Food Sovereignty Assessment 2019-2022

The Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee, on behalf of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, hereby enact the following Resolution:


WHEREAS, the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa are a sovereign people, who occupy the Fond du Lac Reservation and retain their aboriginal rights of self-government and self-determination pursuant to the Treaty of LaPointe of September 30, 1854, 10 Stat. 1109; the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, 25 U.S.C. § 461 et seq.; the common law of the United States; and as recognized by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of September 13, 2007; and


WHEREAS, it is the sovereign obligation of the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee, as the duly-constituted governing body of the Fond du Lac Band, to exercise the responsibilities of self-government and management over the Band's affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee has developed the Fond du Lac Reservation Food Sovereignty Assessment 2019-2022 as a guide for the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa to use in developing future food sovereignty initiatives; and

WHEREAS, NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee hereby adopt the "Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Food Sovereignty Assessment 2019-2022" as a guide in future food sovereignty initiatives on the Fond du Lac Reservation

We do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly presented and acted upon by vote of 4 for, 0 against, 0 silent, with a quorum of 5 being present at a Special Meeting of the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee held on April 20, 2022 on the Fond du Lac Reservation.

  
Kevin R. Dupuis, Sr.  
Chairman

  
Ferdinand Martineau, Jr.  
Secretary/Treasurer



Chairman  
Kevin R. Dupuis, Sr.  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Ferdinand Martineau, Jr.

Dist. I Representative  
Wally J. Dupuis

Dist. II Representative  
Bruce M. Savage

Dist. III Representative  
Roger M. Smith, Sr.

Executive Director,  
Tribal Programs  
Miyah M. Danielson

Executive Director,  
Tribal Enterprises  
Terry Savage

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# FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

## What is Food Sovereignty?

As defined through the Declaration of Nyéléni, the first global forum on food sovereignty, in 2007, “Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.”

## How does Fond du Lac define Food Sovereignty?

During the 2019 Food Sovereignty Initiative Strategic Plan Update, Fond du Lac defined food sovereignty as “A condition where FDL community members are willing and able to obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally-adequate diet through a sustainable, local food system that maximizes community self-reliance, cooperation, and resilience.

## Fond du Lac Food Sovereignty Vision Statement

The Fond du Lac Bimaaji'idiwin Food Sovereignty Initiative envisions a sovereign, holistic food system rooted in Anishinaabe values that is environmentally responsible and empowers a thriving, resilient community.



## ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Food Sovereignty Assessment Survey was conducted from December 2018 to May 2019. The project evaluated the community's food needs, wants, and ideas, in order to inform the efforts for food sovereignty at Fond du Lac going forward. The First Nations Development Institute's [Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool](#) (1st and 2nd Edition) and previously-completed assessments from other tribal nations (Blackfeet, Nisqually, Pawnee Nation) were consulted in the process of drafting Fond du Lac's document.

Though the survey did collect a broad swath of community input, it is just intended to provide a snapshot of the current conditions at Fond du Lac, and is not representative of the community's relations with food on the whole.



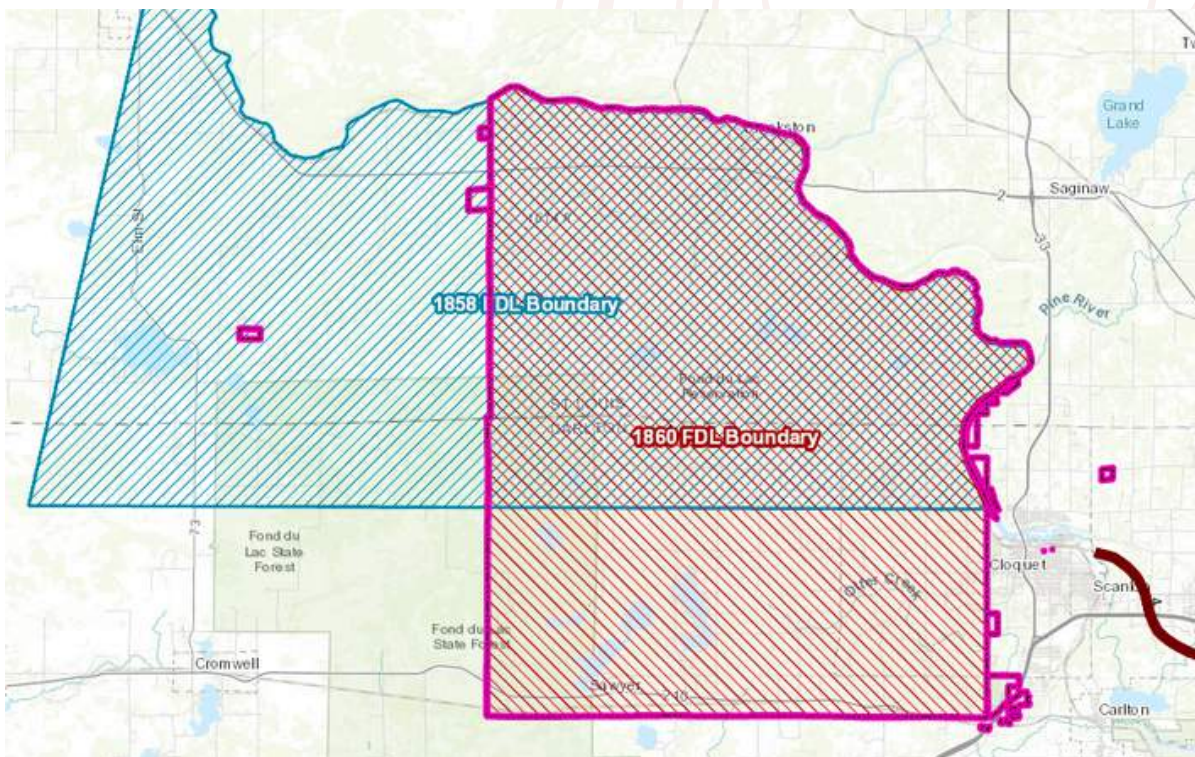
Waaminogaan built from iron wood and birchbark by Russel Northrup and Family in August 2019



# FOND DU LAC HISTORY

The Fond du Lac Band is one of seven Ojibwe bands in Minnesota. The Fond du Lac Reservation (in Ojibwemowin: Nagaajiwanaang, “where the water stops”), is located just west of the point of Lake Superior, and is made up of communities in Cloquet, Brookston, and Sawyer.

Oral histories and archaeological evidence tell a story of westward migration by Ojibwe people from the Atlantic Seaboard to the Great Lakes Region in search of the prophesied manoomin (wild rice). Fond du Lac and other Ojibwe bands maintained a hunting-gathering lifestyle centered around seasonal production (maple sugaring in spring, fishing in summer). European colonization of the Great Lakes region beginning in the early 17th century profoundly harmed the traditions and lifestyle of the Fond du Lac Band and other Native people in the region. Ojibwe relations with European colonizers progressively worsened as the English encouraged settlers to move into Minnesota in search of farmland, timber, and mineral resources. By the 1840s, the United States wanted to force Lake Superior Ojibwe bands to move further west into the previously-unceded territory, but Ojibwe people mounted a strong resistance, which allowed them to remain in the area of their traditional homelands. Failed removal efforts by the US government led to the creation of the 1854 Treaty of La Pointe, which established the Fond du Lac Reservation. Critical to food sovereignty, the original reservation boundaries excluded the main wild rice lakes, so the boundaries were redrawn upon appeal by the tribe.

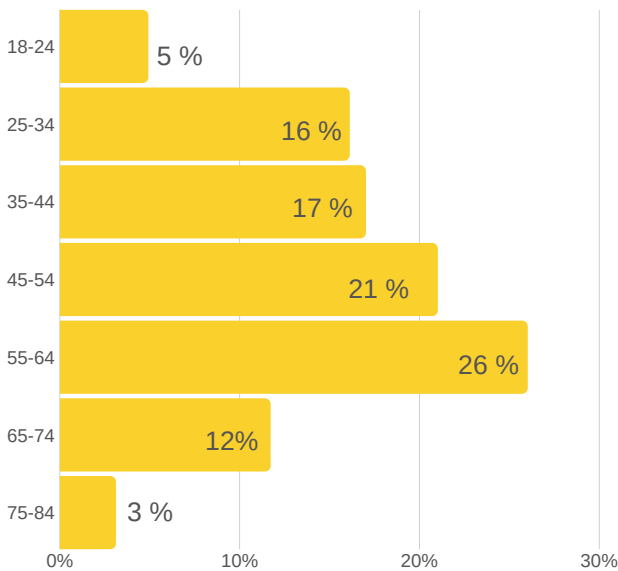


# FOOD SOVEREIGNTY SURVEY - DEMOGRAPHICS

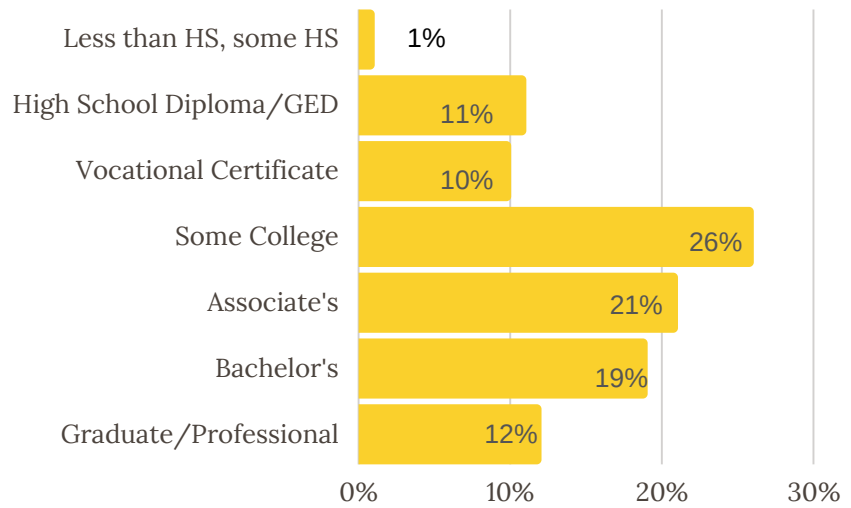
According to the Fond du Lac enrollment records, there are approximately 4,212 enrolled Fond du Lac Band members. In 2017, 4,011 individuals were reported by the U.S. Census to be living on the reservation. Of those individuals, 1,687 self-reported being American Indian or Alaska Native. The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) records show a population of approximately 3,841 MCT members accessing services in the local area, with 2,249 of those individuals being Fond du Lac Band members (2018)

The survey was originally completed by 342 individuals. Of those 342, 223 identified themselves as Fond du Lac Band members, FDL descendants, or tribal elders. The remaining 119 surveys were taken by FDL employees with no other tribal affiliation, individuals enrolled in other tribes, non-Native American family member of Fond du Lac Band member, or non-Native people living in reservation boundaries. For the purpose of this survey, we will only be assessing the 223 surveys, unless otherwise noted.

## AGE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



## LEVEL OF EDUCATION



**67%**

of survey results identified as female. 31% identified as male, and 2% identified as non-binary.



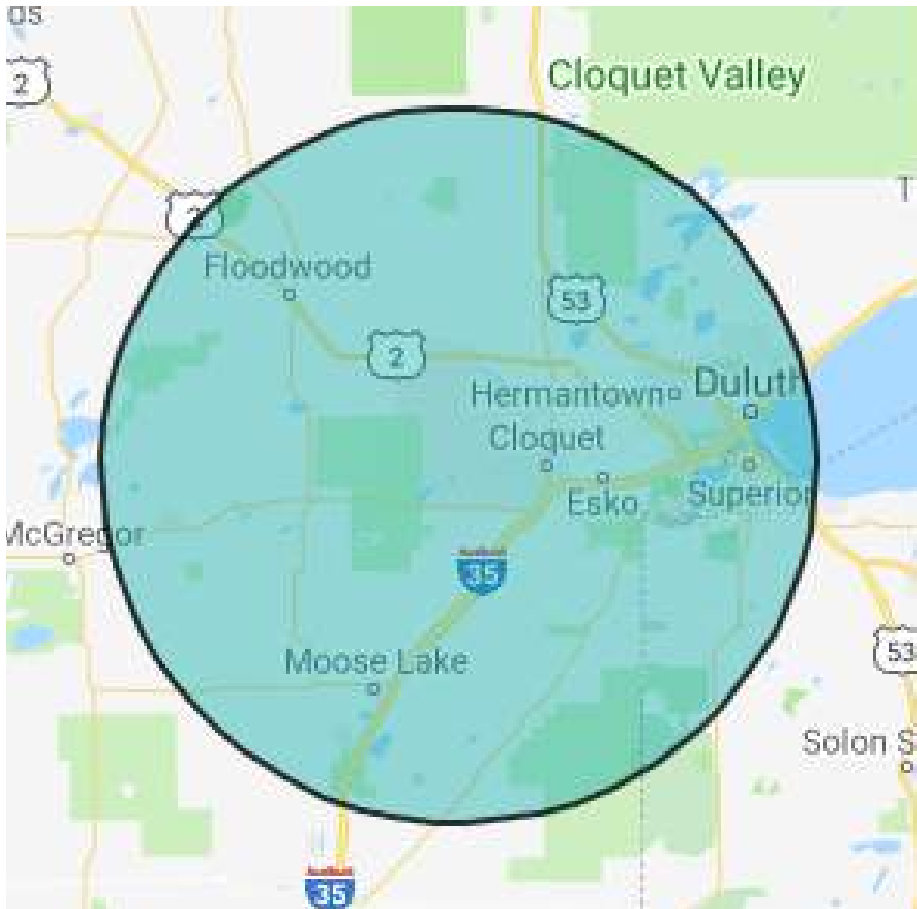
# DEMOGRAPHICS

# 3

is the average household size. 20 households have 7 or more people, and 14 is the largest household size.



Of the 223 Fond du Lac Band members, descendants, and elders surveyed, 134 live on the Fond du Lac Reservation, 67 live within 30 miles of the reservation, and 22 live in other locations outside of the 30-mile radius.



# 30%

of the Fond du Lac Band members, descendants, and elders surveyed live within a 30-mile radius of Fond du Lac.

# FOOD ACCESS

Food access is determined by numerous factors, such as the accessibility of grocery stores or hunting/gathering places in a community. Through this assessment we looked at a variety of factors to determine the level of food insecurity among Fond du Lac Band members, descendants, and tribal elders. FDL's Food Sovereignty Team will take these results into consideration while making future food sovereignty plans. If you or a family member is struggling with food access, see the appendix at the back for a list of resources that may help.

## BARRIERS IDENTIFIED TO EATING MORE HEALTHY FOODS

### Barrier

Money	64
Time limitations to buy and prepare fresh foods	60
Availability of fresh foods	15
Quality of fresh foods	24
Distance to a grocery store with fresh foods	10
Don't know how to cook	0
No barriers	35

17%

of people said that there are days where they need food assistance but don't receive any support

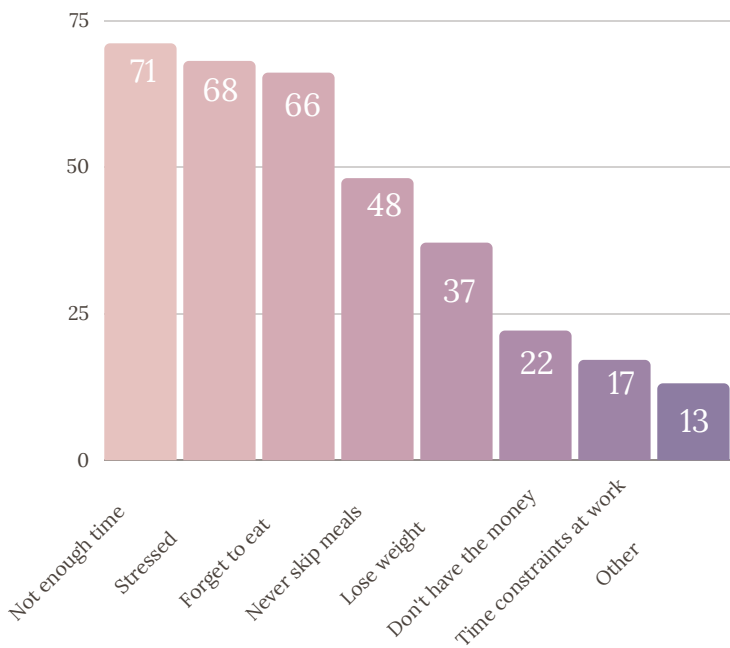
# FOOD ACCESS

26 %

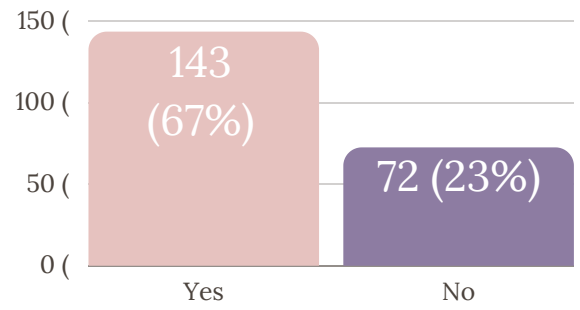
of respondents mentioned that they often make food sacrifices to pay for something else.

## REASONS PEOPLE ARE PUSHED TO SKIP MEALS

Respondents were able to choose as many answers that applied to them. The most common answer was that time pressures don't allow people a chance to eat, with being stressed and forgetting to eat not too far behind. Some of the "other" responses include: not hungry, medical conditions, to save food for consumption at a later time, and only eats once all of the children in the house eat.



## Aware of SNAP and WIC eligibility



For more information on eligibility requirements for SNAP and WIC turn to Appendix C

## HOW AFFORDABLE/ACCESSIBLE IS HEALTHY FOOD?

The affordability of healthy food received an average score of 4 out of 10.

The accessibility of healthy food received an average score of 6 out of 10.

0=Not at all, 10=Very



5%



of people noted that they do not have access to reliable transportation to a food source

# PERSONAL GARDENS

Having a personal garden at your home or participating in community gardens can have a positive impact on your physical and mental health. Gardening is shown to combat depression and anxiety as well as help with reducing stress and can combat high blood pressure.

**36%** of respondents currently grow produce at home or in a community garden

## I GROW THE FOLLOWING:



## AT HOME RESOURCES

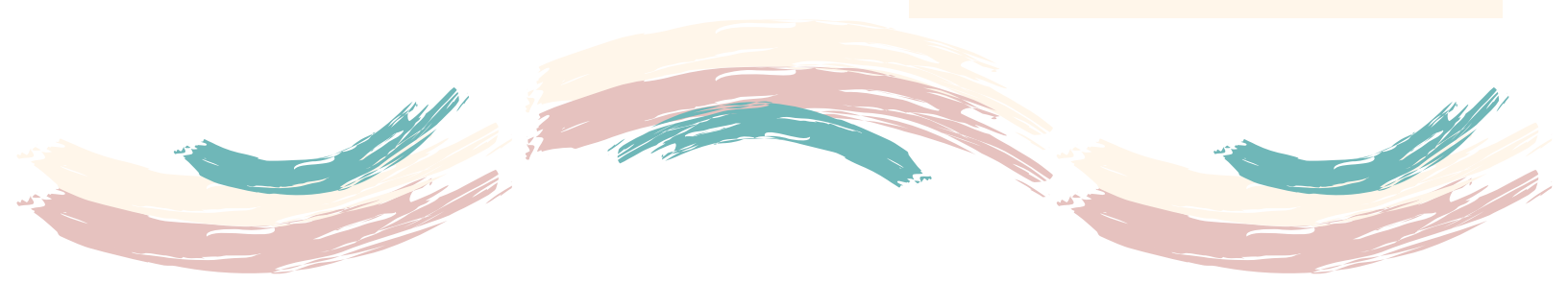
The following resources are available in various personal homes. It was noted in the "other" section that one person has wild rice processing equipment, as well as maple syrup equipment.

<u>Resource</u>	No.
Fruit trees	68
Wild edibles	68
Vegetable garden	60
Berry bushes	54
Chickens	16
Smokehouse for fish	13
Nut trees	5
Livestock	2

## BARRIERS TO GROWING PRODUCE AT YOUR HOME

This question was in a check all that apply format. Three people noted no barriers, one noted cost and another noted too many pests in the "other" section.

<u>Barrier identified</u>	<u>No.</u>
Don't have the space	83
Poor soil quality	65
Takes too much time	62
Too physically challenging	43
Don't know how	38
Not interested	17
Don't eat vegetables	2



# HEALTH

Obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, dental disease, and osteoporosis are among the most common causes of death in the world.

Unhealthy diet contributes to approximately 678,000 deaths each year in United States. It is important to include disease fighting foods: foods that fight viral infections, and foods that kill bacteria, including prebiotics, antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals! Highly recommended are berries, cruciferous vegetables, mushrooms, fish, teas, nuts.

## DO YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING ALLERGIES, CONDITIONS, OR ILLNESSES?

No.   Allergy

60	Lactose intolerance
12	Gluten intolerant and allergy
9	Shellfish allergy
6	Nut allergy
2	Egg allergy
1	Soy Allergy

No.   Condition

98	High blood pressure
84	Obesity
74	Anxiety
61	Depression
58	High Cholesterol
57	Diabetes
57	Arthritis
17	Irritable Bowel Syndrome
15	ADHD
9	Cancer

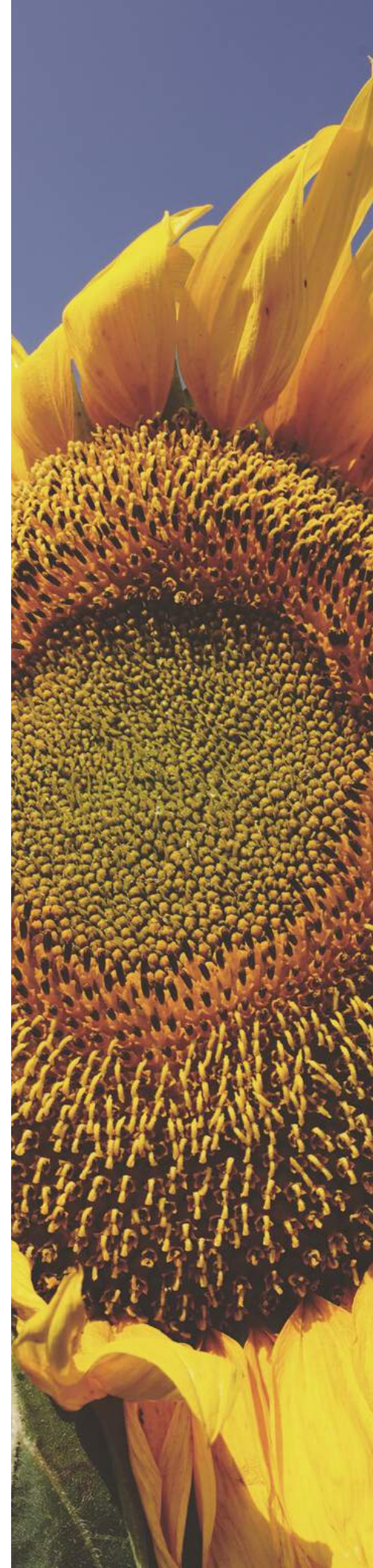
## DO YOU ENJOY EATING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES?

**BOTH**

**JUST FRUIT**

**JUST VEGETABLES**

**NEITHER**

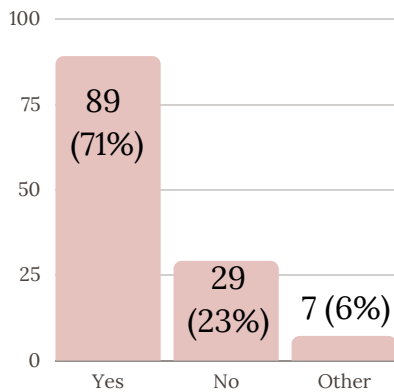


# HEALTH

Type 2 diabetes is most common in American Indian and Alaska Native people. These disproportionately adverse health outcomes are a direct result of European colonization, which forcibly disrupts Native American communities' traditional foodways, and utilizes bad food as a weapon through programs such as the Commodities Program. Redeveloping Native American control over foods, medicines, and resources is one of the most powerful mechanisms to ensure health justice.

## DOES YOUR WORKPLACE SUPPORT HEALTHY EATING?

For this question we looked at results of all FDL employees, regardless of tribal affiliation.



## SUGAR SWEETENED BEVERAGES

On average how many times a week do you drink pop or other sugar sweetened beverages?

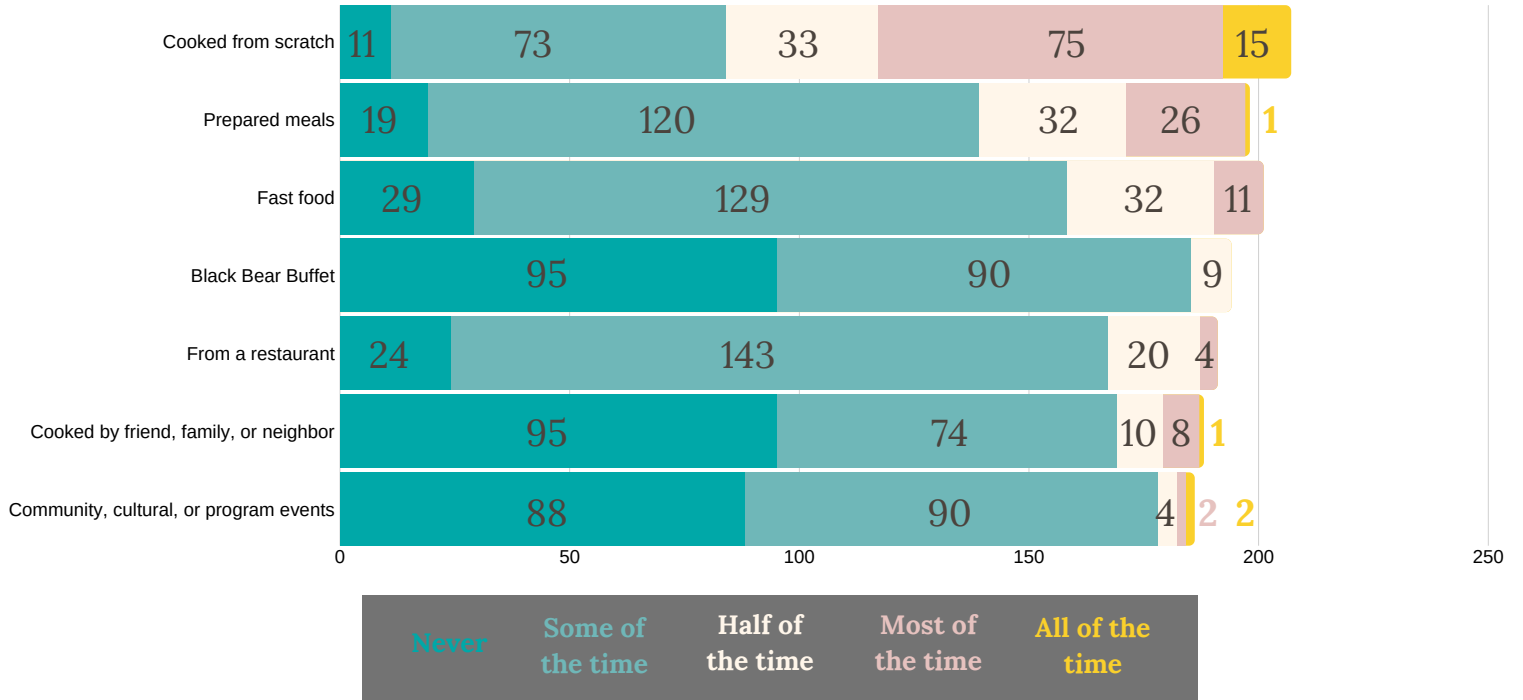


77%

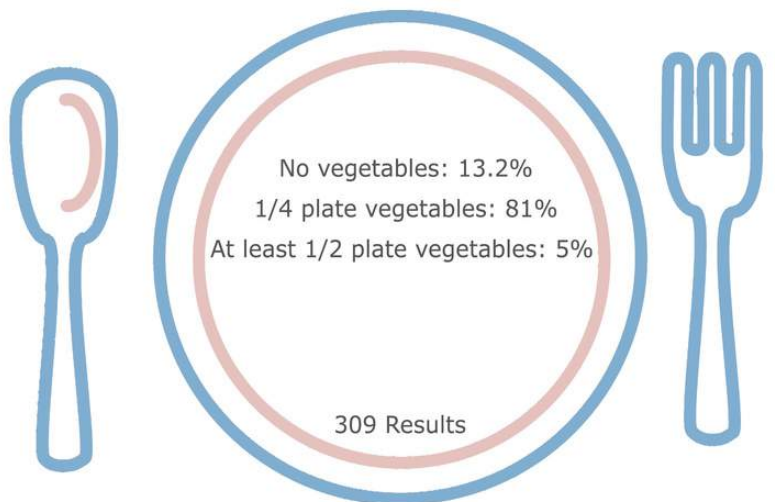
of people noted that diabetes is a health concern

# HEALTH

IN THE AVERAGE WEEK, HOW OFTEN IS YOUR FOOD PREPARED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS?



WHAT DOES YOUR PLATE LOOK LIKE?



# TRADITIONAL FOODS

When asked about where they learn about food traditions, 159 people answered family members. Tribal elders and community members were the next top answers, with 92 and 90 responses respectively. Friends (68), books (55), school (39), FDL programs (35), online (34), and classes (26) were the remaining results.



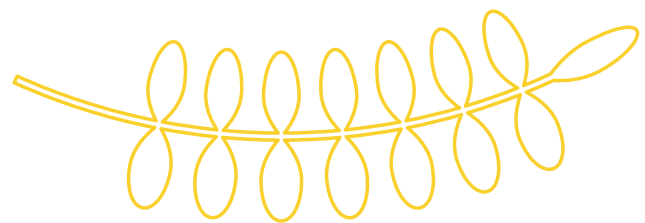
## WHICH TRADITIONAL FOODS DO YOU WISH YOU ATE MORE OFTEN?

- Okosimaan (squash)
- Moozo-wiyyaas (moose meat)
- Gitigaanens (vegetables)
- Manoomin (wild rice)
- Aniibiish (tea)
- Zhiwaagamizigan (maple syrup)
- Giigoonh (fish)
- Ogaa (walleye)
- Bagaan (nuts)
- Bizhiki (buffalo)
- Mawinzwaan (berries)

## BARRIERS TO EATING MORE TRADITIONAL FOODS

In addition to the results below, time (5), cost of rice (3), and physical limitations (2) were other barriers noted. Participants were asked to check all that apply.

<u>Barrier identified</u>	<u>No.</u>
I don't know where to get them	97
I don't know how to get them	50
I don't know how to prepare them	50
I don't know how to identify them	45
I don't have access to the place where they are	32
I currently eat them as much as I want	16
I'm not sure that they are safe to eat	13
The place I used to the them is gone	10
I have never eaten them	10



66%

of people do not eat traditional foods as much as they would like.





# TRADITIONAL FOODS

## I PARTICIPATE IN THE FOLLOWING:

	Yes	No	Want to Learn
Berry Picking	131	29	29
Gardening	97	60	30
Pole Fishing	87	82	12
Deer Hunting	83	87	17
Wild Ricing	60	68	52
Sugar Bush	57	73	54
Bird Hunting	48	121	15
Traditional Medicines	42	69	73
Netting	40	109	33
Moose Hunting	36	117	28
Spear Fishing	34	115	35
Snaring Rabbit	34	122	26

## I GATHER THE FOLLOWING FOODS



64%

survey respondents reported their diet consists of foods they or their family member gathered

# TRADITIONAL FOODS

## HOW WOULD IT AFFECT YOU IF THE FOLLOWING HARVEST FAILS SEVERAL YEARS IN A ROW?

### Maple syrup, deer, moose, wild rice, fish:

"We rely on all of the foods listed here to be in our household. My family believes that this is a part of who we are as a people. These foods are what our people survived on, and for us to still be able to rely on these foods is extremely important for us to still be able to participate in many of our traditional activities."

### Fish:

"Going netting/spearing is one of my favorite things to do. We consume a lot of fish and I love being out on the lake. I love being around our people, while we do this. I feel connected to the community and to the culture. These treaty rights that we have, have brought me closer to my dad and I am thankful for that."

### Wild rice:

"It would affect me in all ways. I love going ricing. I love the whole process. Makes me appreciate my food and it makes me thankful and makes my heart full. If I could not go for years, I would be extremely sad. Wild rice is one of the main food that my son eats, and if I was not able to provide that for him, we both would be upset. I love being out on the lake doing that. I feel connected to my culture, the land, my ancestors and my people."

### Moose:

"Moose has always been a provision of our food-- It would affect me in a whole sense. I can't understand how it wouldn't affect everything."



# MANOOMIN

Manoomin (wild rice) has always been intimately tied to the Fond du Lac Band and Ojibwe culture. Native to the Great Lakes region of North America, wild rice grows in shallow to moderate lake depths.

Many of the lakes within the Fond du Lac Reservation are considered some of the best ricing lakes in the entire state of Minnesota. The six primary ricing lakes located on the reservation are Rice Portage Lake, Perch Lake, Jaskari Lake, Deadfish Lake, Mud Lake, and Wild Rice Lake.

In the past, these six lakes provided a surplus of manoomin, supplying the whole of the reservation with an abundance of this traditional crop. However, in the early 1900's a judicial ditch network was constructed with the intention of creating more agricultural area. The hydrologic alterations were not extremely successful and the modified wetlands simply became less wet. The ditching lowered the water levels of many of the lakes on the reservation, which resulted in the loss of hundreds of acres of manoomin habitat.

In order to reverse this negative trend, the reservation began a long-term project to restore Fond du Lac's wild rice population. So far, multiple dams have been constructed to help control the lakes' water levels, and the tenuous process of removing competing vegetation, such as cattails, has begun. The effort has been extremely successful thus far, but hundreds of acres of restoration still remain.



# MANOOMIN – HARVESTING

Wild rice is harvested by canoeing through a stand of the grass, and bending the ripe grain heads with small wooden tools called “knockers.” With the knockers, the heads are gently brushed, dislodging the mature grain so as to thresh the seeds into the canoe. This process is typically a two-person job, with one individual paddling or using a push pool to maneuver, while a second individual “knocks” the rice into the canoe.

Soon after the manoomin is harvested, it is ready to be processed. If one is to process manoomin in a traditional fashion, the first step would be parching. The rice is placed within a large iron pan and parched over hot coals. The heat dries the rice, breaks off the awn, and fractures the hull.

After the hull is fractured with the seed still intact, the manoomin seed is ready to be separated from the fractured hull. This step in manoomin processing is traditionally accomplished through the act of “dancing” on the rice grains. While “dancing” an individual uses the balls of ones feet to twist the hulls off the grains.

Once the grain is separated from the hull, it is placed in a large container for winnowing. Winnowing is the final step in the traditional manoomin processing procedure, and involves the removal of chaff and other unwanted material. The grain is placed in a large container, and then winnowed with a downward motion, moving all the chaff and unwanted material to the front of the bowl for easy removal.

Manoomin, which means “good berry” in the Ojibwe language, is considered a sacred food to the Fond du Lac Band and other tribes. According to oral tradition, the Lake Superior Ojibwe were instructed in a vision to migrate to the “place where there is food upon the waters.” This led many Ojibwe to begin settling around Lake Superior and harvesting the many wild rice lakes of northern Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Today, manoomin remains a staple of Ojibwe diets. High in protein, yet low in fat and calories, manoomin offers a high nutritional value. And, with its cultural and spiritual significance, the aquatic grass is a necessary food for any community feast or ceremony.



# BREAST FEEDING/CHEST FEEDING

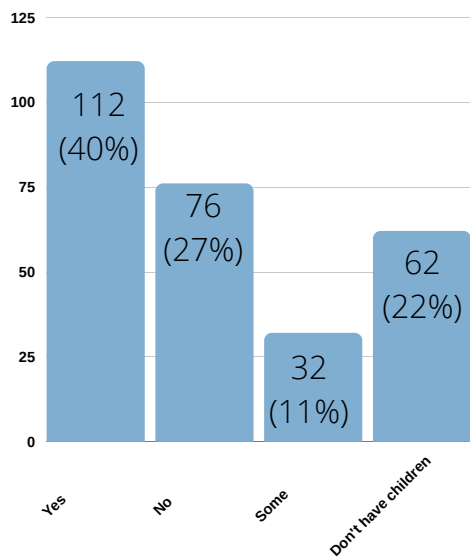
Food Sovereignty starts with The First Food Doodooshaaboo (human milk)

Empowering Indigenous parents to reconnect to a traditional practice, Breastfeeding/Chest Feeding or providing human milk, is the start to reclaiming food sovereignty. A parent providing their newborn human milk restores a bond that was once taken from our ancestors. That bond begins to heal, not only the birthing person, but the community as well. Babies that are exclusively fed human milk for 6 months have a reduced risk of: ear infections, diarrhea, allergies, obesity, diabetes, leukemia, other childhood cancers and the list goes on. Human milk contains thousands of different components that continually change to meet the newborn's needs. A parent providing breastmilk to their children sets them up with a strong foundation and strengthens their identity as a caregiver. Fond du Lac now has a Lactation Support Policy that is included in the [Employee Handbook](#); found in Appendix 10 on page 123.

## METHODS

The results for the following question include answers from band members, descendants, tribal elders, enrolled in another tribe, self-identified tribal members, non-Native American family member of FDL band member, Non-tribal people living on the reservation, and FDL employees. With the exception of Q53, which only looked at FDL employees.

### WERE YOUR CHILDREN CHESTFED?



### REASONS WHY THEY DID NOT CHESTFEED

- 32 Had to go back to work/school
- 19 Didn't like the idea of it
- 7 Lack of support
- 7 Didn't know how
- 6 Health concerns/issues
- 4 Not biological children
- 1 Didn't have proper equipment
- 0 Financial barriers



23%

of survey respondents reported their FDL workplace did not support them while breast pumping

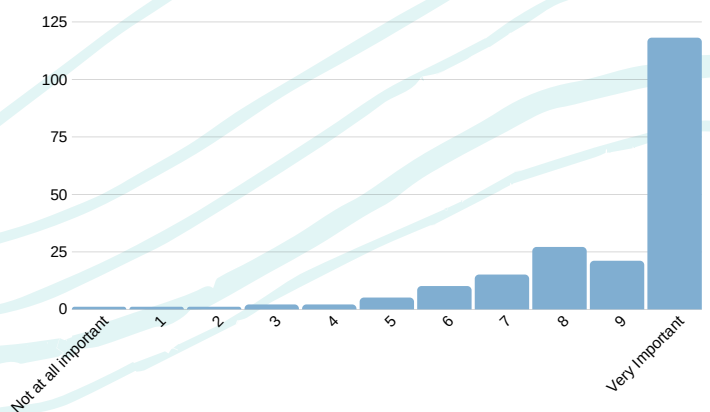
# COMMUNITY INPUT

The following questions were asked in order to get the community's input on food sovereignty efforts. These results can help with shaping the future of food sovereignty at Fond du Lac. We included results from everyone who took the survey since they too can benefit from future program at Fond du Lac. In addition to the options below we had a few noteworthy suggestions written in from respondents that should be taken into consideration: Agricultural department, producer directory printed yearly, healthy meals at ENP, and aquaponics.

- 238 Farmers' markets
- 195 Native Food co-op
- 186 Healthy food truck/ mobile market
- 166 Local produce in Gas and Grocery
- 164 Food preservation classes (freeze drying, dehydrating, canning)
- 149 More education about traditional foods
- 148 Increase availability of traditional foods
- 145 Plant identification
- 143 Classes on how to prepare traditional foods
- 139 More Native food vendors
- 133 Cooking classes
- 132 Home garden support
- 128 Community cookbook
- 113 Better food access
- 113 Community composting
- 105 Farm to School lunches
- 103 Seed bank
- 93 Meat processing facility
- 89 Farming workshops
- 87 Community farm
- 84 Fish smokehouse
- 83 TSA (tribally-supported agriculture) similar to CSA
- 81 Sustainable agricultural practices
- 76 Buffalo herd
- 72 Less farmland lost
- 71 Commercial kitchen to produce and sell traditional foods
- 69 Fish processing facility
- 61 Food policy changes
- 55 Cheaper farm land
- 54 Increase in crop diversity
- 51 More food banks
- 50 Community dry storage

**How important is it for the Ojibwe School to teach K-12 students nutrition, cooking, and gardening skills?**

On a scale of 0-10. 0 Being not at all important and 10 being very important



# COMMUNITY INPUT- GITIGAANING

Gitigaaning, "the place of the gardens," located at 960 Cary Road, is a farm property Fond du Lac purchased in 2017. This property is a food producing learning center for the community. The following results are recorded by all participants in the food sovereignty survey, including non-band members.



46

band members, descendants, and tribal elders said they would be interested in renting a garden plot

## Would you attend workshops at Gitigaaning with the following topics?



Gardening

78%



Animal Care

53%



Cooking/Nutrition

73%



Composting

65%



Food preservation

77%



Sugar Bush

69%



Seed starting

65%



Traditional Medicines

71%



Seed saving

61%

## GITIGAANING (“PLACE OF THE GARDENS”)

In 2017, Fond du Lac Development purchased a 36-acre farm on the reservation. This farm property has a farmhouse, a garage, four outbuildings, and both fenced and open fields. Gitigaaning, "the place of the gardens," operates as a place for the community to come together for different agricultural trainings and events. The farm promotes healthy lifestyles, good food, and encourages and empowers local producers. It is a place where Fond du Lac community members can learn environmentally conscious, and sustainable agricultural practices. Gitigaaning demonstrates a food system that embodies Anishinaabe values, beliefs, and traditions.

Gitigaaning also hosts three different food sovereignty-related programs: the Bimaaji'idiwin Gitigaan Program, the Fond du Lac Gitigaan Program, and the Producer Training Program. Both the Bimaaji'idiwin Gitigaan and Fond du Lac Gitigaan programs tend their own demonstration gardens on the farm, and all the produce from these gardens are donated to the community. Additionally, Bimaaji'idiwin Gitigaan maintains an orchard on the property.

The Producer Training Program was developed through a partnership with Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) Extension and the Fond du Lac Band. It is designed to provide training on producing food, with organic and sustainable practices. The program's primary goal is to encourage farmers to think realistically about running and owning their own farm operation, and ultimately to build the skills necessary to successfully operate small farm enterprises. Gitigaaning also hosts the Producer Training Program, and supplies each producer with their own individual garden plot to tend.

In 2020, a commercial kitchen and cannery facility, Na'enimonigamig, was constructed at the farm for use by the community. There is also the capacity for winter vegetable production in a new geodesic greenhouse (Bimi ginogaan). Future plans at Gitigaaning include hosting more trainings, acquiring equipment, increasing facility use for local producers, and expanding the overall social function of the property through the hosting of more community events.



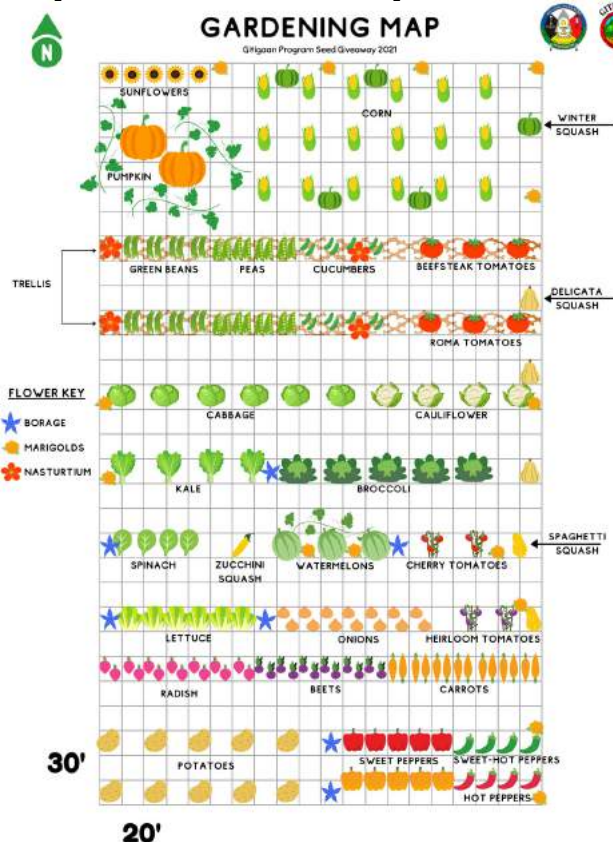
# GITIGAAN PROGRAM

In 1995, Fond du Lac developed the Gitigaan (garden in Ojibwemowin) program to teach gardening skills, encourage the use of native, local foods, and promote a traditional lifestyle to address health issues. The program holds weekly classroom sessions that are open to all community members and run from late March to the beginning of the growing season in June. These sessions feature different local speakers and cover a variety of topics such as soil health, the gathering of traditional medicines, and seed saving.

The program combines important information on horticultural and nutritional topics with the unique history, traditions, and culture of the Ojibwe people. The goal of the Gitigaan program is to act as a resource for the Fond du Lac community, teaching community members the many benefits of growing and harvesting foods necessary for a healthy diet plan.

In addition to their gardening program, Gitigaan offers many other garden-related services. Gitigaan arranges for all interested Band members to have their garden plots tilled for free every Spring. The program hosts an annual plant and seed give away during the first weekend in June, and distributes plants, flowers, and approximately 20 varieties of seeds and seedlings to about 140 tribal households. And, in 2019, Gitigaan made the shift towards Organic by providing all organic seeds and seedlings in their plant giveaway.

The Gitigaan program has also started an organic demonstration garden to showcase the variety of different plants given away every year and to get healthier, local foods into the community. All produce harvested from the organic demonstration garden is distributed throughout the Fond du Lac community. The community high tunnel in Cloquet is now a home for plants that are good for seed saving.



## COMMUNITY HIGH TUNNELS

In 2017 and 2018, Fond du Lac put up three high tunnels, one in each of the three districts comprising the reservation: Cloquet, Sawyer and Brookston. High tunnels are unheated greenhouse-esque structures that capture solar energy and extend the growing season by about two months. These high tunnels are open for community use, and each high tunnel was assigned a champion to help coordinate activities. Members of Fond du Lac's Elder Gardening Program installed raised beds in these high tunnels to ease and improve garden access for Elders.

Each community high tunnel is 1,560 square feet and contains six raised beds and ample ground space for gardening. Each of the raised garden beds are designated to community Elders. They are used to grow small plots of organic vegetables and fruits for the personal use of the producer. The rest of the gardening space is tended to by community members, who are encouraged to assist with the maintenance of their community's respective high tunnel.



# DEMONSTRATION GARDEN (THIRTEEN MOONS)

Ashi-niswi Giizisoog, the 13 Moons Program, is a Fond du Lac Tribal College program that uses the Ojibwe lunar calendar to offer seasonal educational workshops and events.

Demonstrations include, wild rice processing, maple syrup harvesting and finishing, apple cider pressing, canning and processing produce, traditional medicine/plant identification, mind, body, medicine workshops, seasonal crafts/arts and more. The mission of Ashi-niswi Giizisoog is to increase awareness of natural resources, provide new opportunities for social interaction, and increase knowledge of the Ojibwe culture. Currently, 13 Moons is focused on programming that supports USDA NIFA strategic action of supporting informal education to increase food and agricultural literacy of youth and adults and develop programs that increase public knowledge and citizen engagement leading to actions that protect or enhance the nations' food supply, agricultural productivity, environmental quality, community vitality, and/or public health and well-being.

One component of 13 Moons is the Bimaadji'idiwin Ojibwe Garden Program, a research and demonstration garden which aims to preserve and promote traditional Anishinaabe cropping systems, and educate the greater community on contemporary strategies for organic food and medicinal plant production. Every year, plants and seeds are given away to the FDL community, and the demonstration garden works to showcase the variety of different plants and how they can be grown together. All produce harvested from the organic demonstration garden is distributed throughout the FDL community. An important objective for the garden is to expand and maintain a collection of Anishinaabe and Native American heirloom crop seeds through a seed library. The demonstration garden also includes hands-on gardening lessons and workshops, seasonal outlooks, and garden interns.



# S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

The Food Sovereignty Initiative identified a host of strengths of the current FDL local food system as part of a SWOT analysis, a planning technique used to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats regarding a given organizational initiative.

## STRENGTHS

- Sovereignty
- Journey garden, youth participation
- Treaty rights
- Strong core of support
- Traditional knowledge, culture + values
- Available land
- Abundance of off-reservation resources
- Casino purchasing
- Supportive local experts

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Grow food for casino
- New facilities (e.g. cannery)
- Educational opportunities
- Influence food policy
- Potential partnership with Duluth
- Growth & appeal of the region
- Develop community health + well-being
- RBC support of tribal food sovereignty

## WEAKNESSES

- Limitations to staff capacity
- Competing in globalized food system
- Fewer people cooking from scratch
- C-store focused on processed foods

## THREATS

- (Un)sustainability of grant funding
- Climate change
- Dominant Western culture + diet
- Invasive species
- Corporate control of agriculture



# RECOMMENDATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Fond du Lac has made substantial strides in advancing tribal food sovereignty in recent years. Some notable developments include the investments into Gitigaaning, and the success of the Producer Training Program. Future directions regarding food sovereignty efforts at Fond du Lac are presented most comprehensively in the [Agricultural Division Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#) document (available on the Planning Division page of the FDL website). Some of the plans most pertinent to this document include the establishment of a formal Agricultural Division, along with continued efforts to expand food production on the reservation.



# RECOMMENDATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Critical to food sovereignty efforts will be a continued focus on expanding agricultural production to increase control over an abundant and stable supply of healthy foods. More land will need to be made available to support an expanded production system in collaboration with the Land Use Committee and other departments. There are also 10+ acres of land currently unused at Gitigaaning (960 Cary Road) which could be converted into a production farm, a grazing area for ruminants, and/or a dedicated perennial space. This Food Sovereignty Assessment should help to guide expanded production by providing a snapshot of the food needs and wants of the Fond du Lac community.

In tandem with expanding production, the Agricultural Division should support and bolster opportunities for community involvement surrounding tribally-produced foods, including making these products more widely accessible, and expanding programming to share resources and knowledge with the community.



# METHODOLOGY

## SURVEY DESIGN

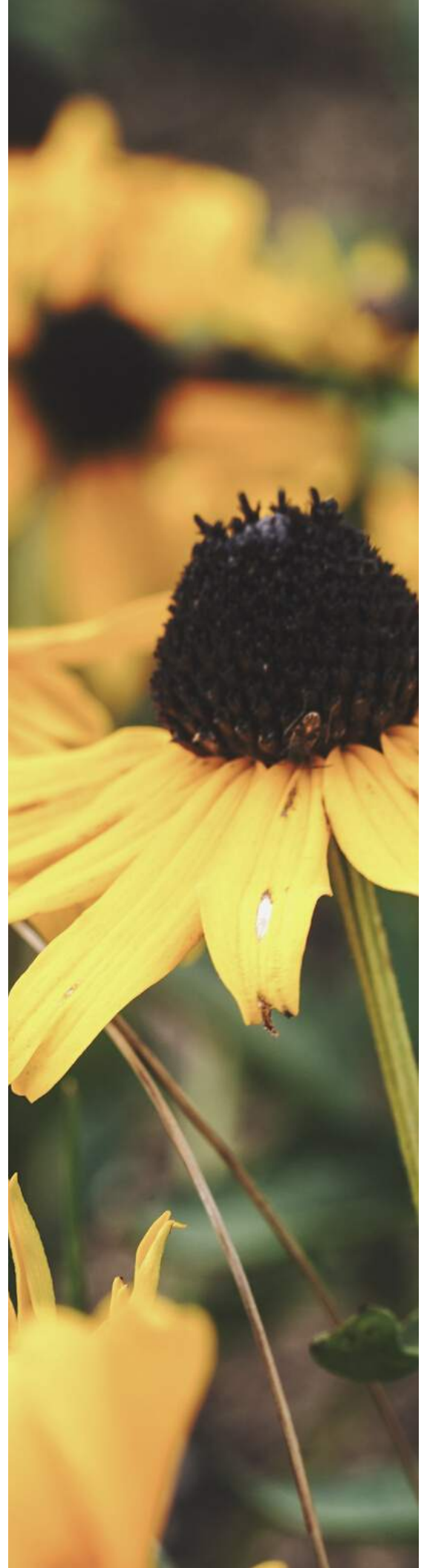
In order for VISTA member Jessica to receive some background information about important food practices at Fond du Lac, she asked food sovereignty team members a series of questions from the First Nations Development Institute's [FSA Tool 2nd Edition](#). The responses she received helped shape the focus of the food sovereignty survey. In addition to those questions, we hosted a meeting where food sovereignty team members could voice their opinions on what the survey and assessment should look like. We had meaningful discussion which ultimately formed the first draft of the survey we distributed.

In January 2019, our VISTA hosted another meeting to present the first draft of survey questions. Team members voiced their opinions and some changes were made. The final survey was formed, and we were ready to distribute. Subsequent VISTA members worked to complete this document after Jessica's term ended.

## SURVEY POPULATION

During group discussions with the food sovereignty team, it was decided that we would accept survey results from enrolled Fond du Lac tribal members or Fond du Lac community members. Community members were loosely defined as people who live, work, or are involved with the Fond du Lac reservation. Including but not limited to descendants, spouses, friends, employees, and neighbors. We sectioned off our survey so we could easily look at results based on the population. For the majority of the assessment we looked at results from FDL Band Members, FDL Descendants, and Tribal Elders only.

Our main source of survey collection came from the online service Qualtrics. We posted the online survey on Fond du Lac website's front page, as well as sending a system wide email to all FDL employees. Paper copies were available for pick up at the Planning department as well as several tribal events.



# APPENDIX: FOOD ACCESS RESOURCES

## Fond Du Lac Community Center Food Pantry

Fond du Lac is providing food packages to enrolled residents who are impacted by the COVID-19 public emergency. Upon a showing of the related need, FDL band members are eligible for a food package to be provided by the RBC through CARES Act funding. In order to be eligible, a Band member must have lost income as a result of COVID-19 or must have additional expenses for necessities due to COVID-19. The Band member must personally pick up the food package(s) for the household and must present the Band member's tribal identification card. District elders with no transportation please contact your district community center.

Questions please contact:

Cloquet Center (218) 878-7589 Mel Diver

Sawyer Center (218) 878-8194 Brenda Shabiash

Brookston Center (218) 878-8048 Bryan Bosto

The application form and more information can be found on the FDL website homepage, [fdlrez.com](http://fdlrez.com).

## SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

Carlton County's Food Support Program provides assistance with monthly food costs. Interested individuals must turn in an application and complete an interview, either in person or over the phone. To apply or with questions, visit <https://www.co.carlton.mn.us/329/Food-Support-Program>.

## WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Program)

WIC is a nutrition and breastfeeding program that helps young families eat well and be healthy.

WIC can: help pregnant woman learn about nutritious foods for a healthy pregnancy and birth; support breastfeeding and help new moms meet their breastfeeding goals; and help families provide nutritious foods to their young children so they are healthy, happy and ready to learn.

To apply online visit

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/ppthome.html>.

For information on income eligibility guidelines, visit

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/exhbts/ex5/5a.pdf>.

The FDL Reservation WIC Program can be reached at 218-878-2115.

Carlton County Public Health – WIC can be reached at 218-878-2853.