

## EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS

### Needs Addressed:

Cherokee is a town of over 8,000 people with a large seasonal influx of tourism. Unfortunately though, only one grocery store and a handful of restaurants, many of which are closed in the winter, serve this town. There is a need for greater selections of fresh fruits and vegetables. This is even more important because of the exceptionally high rate of diabetes in the Cherokee community. One ongoing response has been to encourage and facilitate an in town farmer's market. Market participation has grown and shrank over the past six years but customer demand and need still exists. Cherokee citizens desire locally grown and traditional food selections that are not currently being offered.

### Project/Process:

Our project was to do the strategic planning to create a great, successful farmer's market and local food system. We had planner Warren Miller work with our core group to develop a model of a successful food system: what it would look like, who should be involved and how we could determine we had achieved our goals.

### Partnerships:

- EBCI Cooperative Extension
- EBCI Cherokee Choices - Healthy Living Program
- Cherokee Local Foods Network
- Community growers and value-added product producers
- Community Leaders



2011 Handmade, Homemade, Homegrown  
Market Location

### Lessons Learned:

Even with great planning and wonderful community leaders, only a small amount of produce and food products were sold during the market season. Some leaders were very active, some participants came to the market randomly and many potential vendors that would have been great assets did not choose to participate. In the end, a critical mass of vendors and customers were not able to come together for a successful season-long market. Our lesson learned was to bring more potential vendors into the planning process.



Cherokee Local Food Network Logo

### Results:

- Our core planning group was able to go through the planning process of what we wanted our local food system to look like
- We now have visuals to remind us of where we are going
- Signs were purchased to encourage customer participation

### Next Steps:

Our next steps are to work with new local food distribution ideas such as CSA's, a weekly emailed list of available local produce; another tailgate market and a local youth led healthy food initiative.