



School Community Garden Incorporating Traditional Apsaalooke Plants Encourages Lodge Grass Students to Grow Traditional Apsaalooke Foods at Home



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Introduction:

Most anticipated effects of community gardens on students are focused on elementary school students (Blair 2009; Ozer 2006; Miller et al. 2012). At the request of the Lodge Grass, MT, community this project was to study perceptions of Lodgegrass High School students on the origin of their foods, their connection to traditional foods, and their interest in having a community garden at school, as well as a garden at home. Community gardens at schools have been shown to increase productivity, learning, ability to create positive relationships, and interest in horticulture and nutrition (Blair 2009; Miller et al. 2012).

Hypothesis to be Tested: A school community garden will encourage Lodge Grass High School students to grow traditional Apsaalooke foods in home gardens.

Methods

Phase 1: Methods design and peer-refereed literature review.

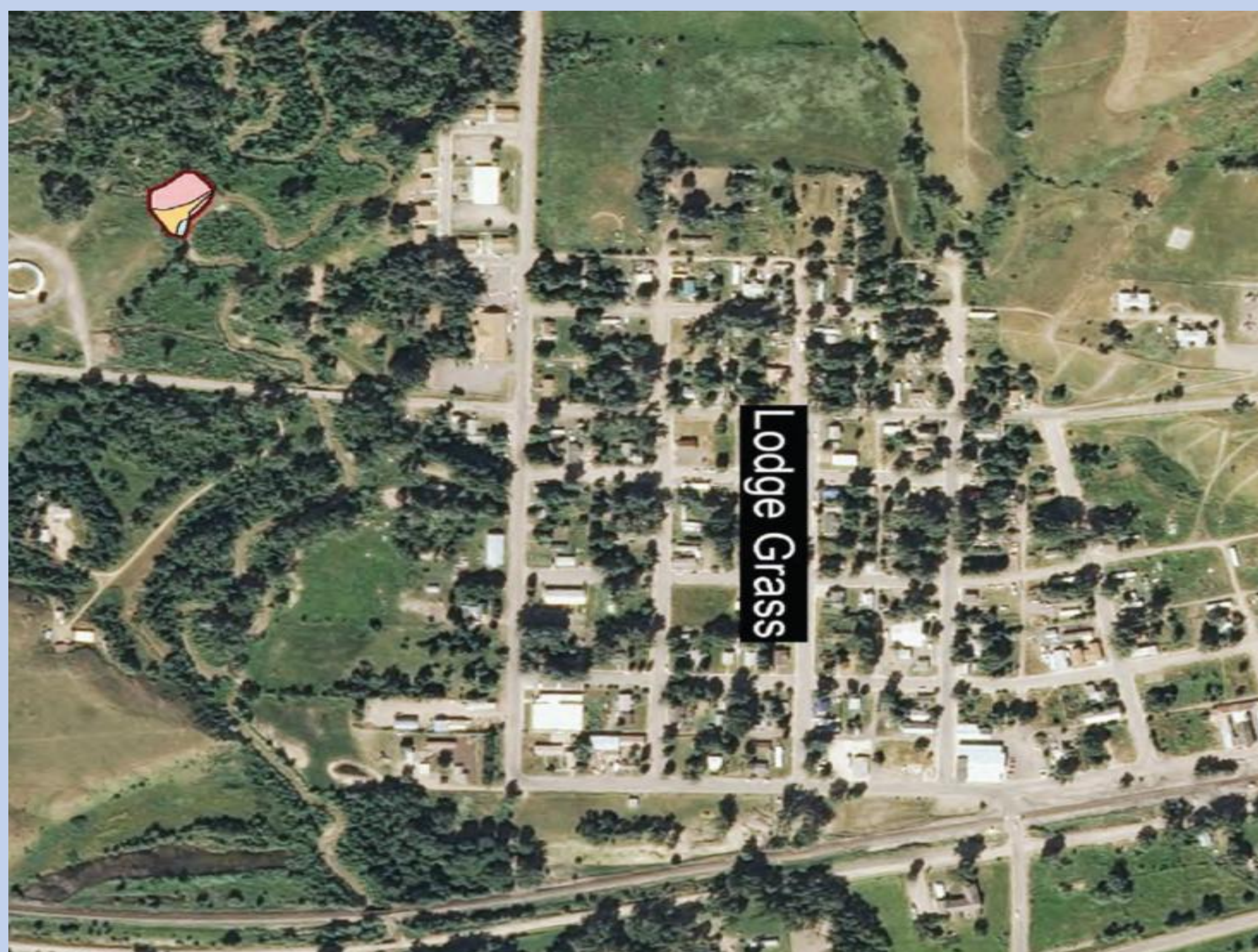
Phase 2: Obtain IRB approval from Lodge Grass High School and from MSU.

Phase 3: Conduct study with Lodge Grass High School Students.

Results

Phase 1 was completed as follows:

1. Students would be asked to each take a sheet of paper and draw on it what they ate yesterday .
2. Then, they would be requested to draw lines from the food items they drew to where they think those food items come from.



The town of Lodge Grass, MT where the study was to be conducted. Colorful area is the berry patch on the south edge of town begun. Land for the managed and wild berry patch was leased by the tribe to Tracie and Kurrie Small in response to a project that arose from within the community. Many AGSC 465R student mentorees helped with information requested. The LG High School is on the north side of town. **Photo Credit:** www.apsaalookeberries.com

3. A short survey would then be conducted for which the questions would be read out loud and answers taken by a show of hands.
4. After the first survey, a short PowerPoint presentation on traditional Apsaalooke plants used for food and community gardens would be shown such as the wild turnip, juneberries, chokecherries, bearberries, bitterroot, and wild carrot (Snell 2006).
5. The survey questions would again be asked, concluding the data collection.

Recommendations

- Make plans for several visits to the high school.
- Include several real traditional plants in the presentation.
- Make berry pudding in school.
- Get to know the students and teachers who are Apsaalooke.

Conclusion:

Although phase 2 and 3 of this project could not be completed within the semester due to unforeseen circumstances, we remain confident that this hypothesis that has come from the Lodge Grass community is a valuable hypothesis to test and the final two phases should be completed.

This study would have helped with the planning of the proposed community garden on the campus and with future studies on the effect of community gardens with traditional plants on other Native American Reservations.

References

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