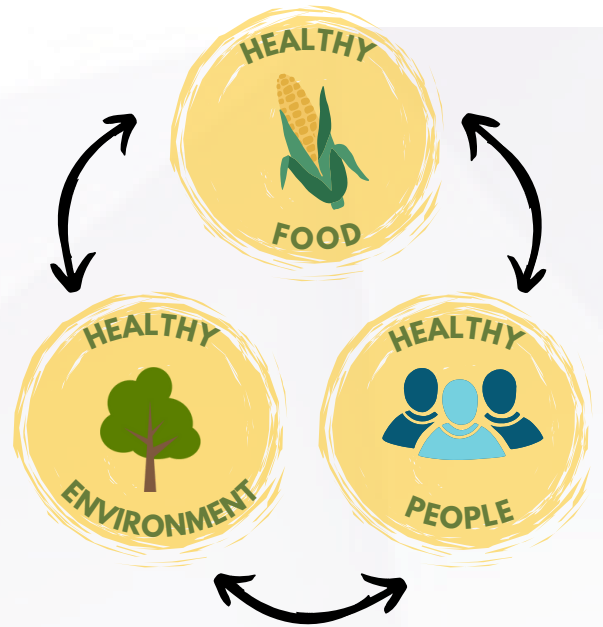




United States
Biosphere Network

USBN Sustainable Food Education Program



Food is at the center of our daily lives. In this era of rapid environmental change, food has the potential to play a significant role in our nutritional and environmental well-being if we learn from those who grow it sustainably. The U.S. Biosphere Network's (USBN) Sustainable Food Education Program brings local farmers, schools, nonprofits, civic organizations, and Indian tribes to the table to exchange and expand knowledge about food, farming, gardening, and cooking. We highlight cultural ties to food and learn about growing it sustainably through local classroom education and experiential programs in biosphere regions, particularly in underserved rural and tribal communities. Three biosphere regions will share their projects with other "sister site" biospheres. By fostering a shared appreciation for food across traditions and cultures, the program supports the USBN vision of a healthy environment where communities thrive through shared knowledge and stewardship of nature.





Abenaki Foodways Teacher Toolkit

Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Region

Indigenous peoples have been cultivating foods in North America, such as corn, beans, and squash, using sustainable practices for millennia. Many of these traditions were adopted by early European settlers.



Native American contributions to our agricultural heritage, as well as their innovations in sustainable farming and unique culinary traditions, tend to be overlooked. The Champlain Adirondack Biosphere Region is located in part of the Ndakina, the unceded homelands of the Abenaki people, known for “3 sisters” agriculture of corn, beans, and squash grown together for their nutritional value, natural weed suppression, and soil resilience-building characteristics. The South Hero Land Trust in Vermont is working with tribal knowledge-keepers and other partners to co-develop the *Abenaki Food Traditions of Vermont: Educator Toolkit* for grades 3-8. In addition to teaching Abenaki history, culture, and food traditions, the SHLT will host Abenaki people in Vermont classrooms to lead hands-on cooking lessons with students, as well as host the public Abenaki speaker series to spread knowledge about tribal food sovereignty, land stewardship, and sustainable agriculture to a wider audience.

Sister Site: Mont St. Hilaire Biosphere Region, Quebec, Canada



Nurturing Our Island's Future: A Puerto Rican Sustainability Initiative

Guanica Forest Biosphere Region,
Puerto Rico



Protectores de Cuencas, a local conservation organization, is demonstrating how community-driven action and innovation can improve food access. In rural southwest Puerto Rico, limited availability of fresh produce remains a significant challenge. To address this, Protectores de Cuencas partnered with Unidos por la Comunidad Las Arenas to empower households in the Las Arenas community to grow their own food.

The successful creation of a nursery for fruit and medicinal plants at the local community center has provided both a hands-on training site and a reliable source of seedlings. Through workshops and educational materials, community members have learned about plant cultivation, sustainable irrigation practices, and small-scale agribusiness development.

In Phase 2, the project is expanding its impact by installing a rainwater irrigation system and offering additional training sessions. By combining practical education with locally produced compost, agribusiness planning, and water management tools, the initiative is pioneering sustainable agriculture and strengthening community resilience.

Sister Site: Luquillo Biosphere Region, Puerto Rico

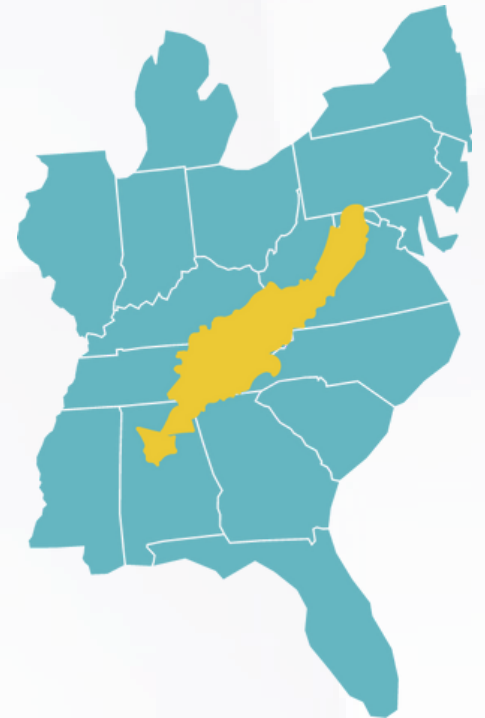


Weaving Contemporary Plant Science & Traditions of Southern Appalachia

Southern Appalachian Biosphere Region

Southern Appalachia has rich cultural traditions and landscapes with high biodiversity and natural beauty. Not as well known or appreciated are the agricultural traditions and foodways of native peoples.

The Southern Appalachian Biosphere Region is located around parts of the reservation and unceded homelands of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians in North Carolina and Tennessee. Working with tribal knowledge-keepers, the Noquisi Initiative held an interdisciplinary workshop to explore how to integrate modern science with Indigenous practices and plant science. As a result, Noquisi Initiative is supporting the creation of a forest garden serving the local population with a diverse array of plants and hands-on learning opportunities. Participants will include Cherokee Language and Culture Learners, youth in local summer camps, and youth programs from surrounding counties, who will start and maintain their own gardens from spring until fall.



**Southern Appalachian
Biosphere Region**

Sister Site: Mammoth Cave Biosphere
Region, Kentucky

Connect with USBN: [Website](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), & [LinkedIn](#)!

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