

Salish Kootenai College, a 1994 Tribal College Extension Program

Virgil Dupuis is the Extension Director for Salish Kootenai College Extension (SKCE) on the Flathead Reservation. SKCE's goals are to provide integrated educational programs for environmental and human health restoration. SKCE focuses on ecological restoration processes through a native plant nursery production and teaching facility, sharing native plant growing techniques with Tribal greenhouse staff, area schools, and with community native plant gardens. SKCE has implemented landscape scale native plantings for restoration of rights-of-ways, riparian areas, wetlands, and rangelands. The program also addresses noxious weed management, research, and aquatic invasive plants. SKC Extension also promotes collaboration to protect water quality. SKCE implements community based nutritional and physical activity programs promoting community and family gardens, healthy cooking and food preservation, senior and youth nutrition, and increasing physical activity.

Activities Relevant to State Plan to Prevent Obesity: Organizing and promoting community gardening; teaching fresh food preparation; provision of more healthful alternatives through feeding programs. Promoting the use the new bike path construction provided during recent highway reconstruction with an annual Bike Path Appreciation Day, promoting physical activity and healthy locally produced food. SKC Extension has begun delivery of curriculum in diet, health, and fitness aimed at preventing and reversing diet related illness.

Services/Recipients: Tribal Elders, young parents, college students, and school children. Working on provisioning school food programs with fresh and local products.

State Plan Settings: Built Environment; Food Access; Schools; Social/Cultural Environments.

CDC Behaviors:

- Increasing fruit, vegetable, and whole unprocessed grain consumption;
- Decreasing sugar-sweetened beverage consumption;
- Decreasing consumption of energy dense foods (> 4 calories/gram);
- Increasing physical activity;

Gaps, Concerns, and Suggestions for Consideration: Biggest competitor for improved school meals and other feeding programs is free commodities. How to reach people who use commodities on a daily basis for a major portion of their calorie intake, and how to change the types of foods the commodity purchase programs are providing. Policy needs to change through the USDA Food and Nutrition service to subsidize and provide local meats, vegetables, and fruits. Commodity subsidies need to change to eliminate corn and sugar subsidies. How to utilize an existing USDA certified kitchen infrastructure for school meals processing that can use local foods. Building among population an expectation and desire to consume locally produced foods. More utilization and construction of local food processing and storage infrastructure like Mission Mountain Food Enterprises. Nutrition and food safety education for service providers. Improve young people's cooking skills. Parent education. Language we use for talking about the problem – the term "obese" is inherently pejorative – use some other term than "obesity prevention." Chronic un- and underemployment on the Reservations, especially among younger people. Need sufficient resources to launch additional programs or hire additional staff – incremental funds tend only to increase workloads of existing staff.