As settlers seized land from Native peoples, many TEK practices were banned. TEK practices such as cultural burning, traditional salmon fishing, and hunting were regulated or forbidden. These practices were instead replaced with the construction of dams, the development of protected wildlands on which maintenance and “interference” by humans was limited. Deforestation and mining, which polluted waterways once relied upon for food, became common and traditional methods of obtaining cultural foods became difficult to practice.

Additionally, federal policy aimed at assimilation often led to changes in diet. Foods like acorns, elk, deer, and salmon were less accessible and less popular. In some cases, the habitat in which these species live was destroyed. Many Native communities stopped harvesting and consuming acorns, instead eating popular Western foods like white bread and canned vegetables. This massive shift in the types of foods consumed by Natives has led to enormous health disparities. Diseases most common in Indian Country are diabetes, coronary health disease, and obesity.

Across the United States, Tribal communities are reinvigorating their traditional food ways. Because of the negative impact of Western food on Native health, communities are working to reintroduce traditional foods and TEK into their communities.

In many cases, this traditional knowledge was never truly lost.

Note About Food Sovereignty:

Wondering how communities support Native food sovereignty? We have included some examples below.

1. Developing community health centers that grow and distribute healthy Indigenous foods to Native families.
2. Community gathering and hunting trips.
3. Using traditional trapping and fishing methods on traditional waterways.
4. Envisioning Native foods through a modern lens, in Native owned restaurants and businesses.

If you notice these methods being practiced in your community, reach out to the organizers and see if you can help support their work through sharing their messaging, volunteering, and/or donating.
Learning Standards.

Next Generation Science Standards

K-LS1-1. Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

Analyzing data in K–2 builds on prior experiences and progresses to collecting, recording, and sharing observations. Use observations (firsthand or from media) to describe patterns in the natural world in order to answer scientific questions.

Scientific Knowledge is Based on Empirical Evidence Scientists look for patterns and order when making observations about the world.

All animals need food in order to live and grow. They obtain their food from plants or from other animals. Plants need water and light to live and grow.

Patterns in the natural and human designed world can be observed and used as evidence.

Common Core Math:

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.4.A

When counting objects, say the number names in the standard order, pairing each object with one and only one number name and each number name with one and only one object.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.4.B

Understand that the last number name said tells the number of objects counted. The number of objects is the same regardless of their arrangement or the order in which they were counted.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.4.C

Understand that each successive number name refers to a quantity that is one larger.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.5

Count to answer “how many?” questions about as many as 20 things arranged in a line, a rectangular array, or a circle, or as many as 10 things in a scattered configuration; given a number from 1-20, count out that many objects.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.6

Identify whether the number of objects in one group is greater than, less than, or equal to the number of objects in another group, e.g., by using matching and counting strategies.
Learning Standards.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.C.7 Compare two numbers between 1 and 10 presented as written numerals.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.OA.A.1 Represent addition and subtraction with objects, fingers, mental images, drawings, sounds (e.g., claps), acting out situations, verbal explanations, expressions, or equations.

*History Social Science Standards- California*

Students use map and globe skills to determine the absolute locations of places and interpret information available through a map’s or globe’s legend, scale, and symbolic representations.

Students identify the human and physical characteristics of the places they are studying and explain how those features form the unique character of those places.