KISS THE GROUND FARMER GRANT ‘25-’26

Nalwoodi Denzhone Community
SAN CARLOS, ARIZONA

The Plan

On the San Carlos Apache Reservation, Eric Shin and the Nalwoodi Denzhone Community set out to restore the land while strengthening access to nourishing, culturally significant foods. Their plan: integrate sheep and chickens through adaptive grazing, using mobile coops and cover crops to protect the soil, improve nutrient cycling, and create a regenerative food system rooted in community health and Apache traditions.

Challenges & Learnings

Arizona’s intense sun, exposed soil, and predator pressure make regenerative farming especially challenging. Severe flooding brought additional setbacks. Through these experiences, the team is learning how to protect the soil, manage livestock more effectively, and adapt their practices to the desert environment.

Adaptations

With support from Kiss the Ground, the team introduced mobile chicken coops, rotating poultry through pastures and between rows of a new micro-orchard. They also planted cover crops to shield exposed soil from the sun, provide forage, and support healthier nutrient cycling while expanding their multispecies grazing system.

Community Impact

The project has trained 225 community members in regenerative agriculture and helped establish a partnership with the San Carlos Unified School District to develop an agriscience program. The team is also working with the Tribe and local hospital to bring farm-grown, traditional Apache foods into community institutions.

Results

With a $20,000 Kiss the Ground grant, Nalwoodi Denzhone Community brought 10 acres under regenerative management, with another 30 acres planned. Mobile chicken coops and cover crops are supporting adaptive grazing, soil protection, and food production. Despite severe flooding, the team continues growing traditional crops, including Apache red sugarcane and Apache squash, while building a community-led model for regenerative agriculture.

BIGGEST IMPACT

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION



“Part of our mission and goals here is to revitalize the earth and also revitalize the community.”

– ERIC SHIN
NALWOODI DENZHONE COMMUNITY