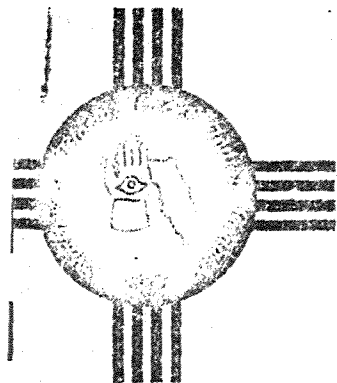


**1978 History of Northwest Florida Creek Indian Council
Muscogee Nation of Florida Technical Assistance Response 2002,
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Northwest Florida Creek Indian Council

P. O. Box 462, Pensacola, Florida 32592, 904-432-9639

HISTORY

OF

NORTHWEST FLORIDA CREEK INDIAN COUNCIL

The Northwest Florida Creek Indian Council, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, was created by Florida House of Representatives Bill 2306 in 1975. As provided for in the legislation, the Governor of Florida makes the appointment of nine (9) Council members, of which seven (7) must be Creek Indian.

The first organizational meeting of the Council was held September 1975, with the following members being present: Mr. Buford L. Rolin, appointed Chairman; Mr. H. M. Stewart, Vice-Chairman; Mrs. Kathy Cruz, Secretary, Mr. W. V. Williams, Treasurer, Mr. Eddie Tullis; Mr. John Kemp; Mr. Homer Gaines; Mr. C. H. Partain and Mr. Wesley Tomley, with Mr. Joe Mooney acting executive director.

During the initial organization, the Council was approached by residents of both Santa Rosa and Okaloosa Counties who have indicated a desire to participate in the Council's activities. In March 1976, the Council asked the Florida Legislative Delegation for an amendment to the Florida status, Chapter 75-370, to expand membership to these two counties and to increase the membership of the Council from nine (9) to eleven (11) members, including residents of Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa Counties.

The Northwest Florida Creek Indian Council was created for the purpose of enabling "the Creek Indians and their descendants residing in Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa Counties to enjoy the full benefits of State, Local, and Federal programs for the economic, cultural and social advancement of the Creek Indians." The Council, as such, has full powers to conduct activities for the benefits of Creek Indians and other non-reservated Native American Indians.

Although the current members of the Northwest Florida Creek Indian Council are appointed by the Governor, it is the goal of the Council to have its members elected in an orderly and proper manner which would comply with all State and Federal Laws. In this regard, it is the position of the Council that when such an election is held, that all Creek Indians should be provided the opportunity to vote, not just those individuals who have been certified under Docket 21.

Mr. John Kemp (an artist) obtained the first grant for the Council from the Festival Endowments of Fine Art, and classes in the culture of Indian arts and crafts were taught. Many Indian people of the area attended these classes and learned the art of Indian bead, basket, and finger weaving which was an Indian art not used for many, many years. These classes were conducted the Spring of 1976.

In July 1976, the Council advertised for an executive director and a secretary to staff the Council office that would be funded through the Escambia County Public Service Employment Program. Mrs. Juanita Steadham Felter was employed as the executive director in July, to begin work in August, 1976, and Mrs. Kay Simmons as secretary in September 1976, both being of Creek Indian decent. The Escambia County Commissioners provided the Council with operational budget and provided office space in the old Court House Annex loc:

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Jefferson Street, with the loan of a desk and a chair, with the Inter-Governmental office providing another desk on loan and the chair was borrowed from the waiting room of the Court house. Mrs. Felter provided her personal typewriter and other office equipment to carry on the functions of the office.

In September 1976, the Northwest Florida Creek Indian Council was awarded a small grant to be used as a summer youth recreation program from the Community Service Administration. This program was carried out each Saturday during the month of September 1976 at the Molino Elementary School. At this time we were able to use the service of the people that were trained in the earlier craft classes to conduct this program. There was an average of 150 people attending these classes from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M.

In September 1976 a Comprehensive Employment Training Act, Title III, Sec. 302 for non reserved Indians grant was written and it was approved for funding on October 14, 1976 in the amount of \$86,951.00 which was for the vocational and technical training for the non-reserved Indians. The initial participants were eight (8) enrolled in the vocational schools at Pensacola Jr. College and George Stone, with one of the initial enrollment participants to complete her course of study.

In December 1976 a grant was written to a private foundation for a small grant in the amount of \$2,500.00, to be used for the office equipment and furniture for the office. The grant was awarded to the Council in February 1977 and the initial purchase of three desks, three secretarial chairs, six side chairs, a file cabinet and a typewriter was obtained with this grant.

In February 1977 a grant was written to conduct a Creek Indian census for the tri-county area. The grant had to be rewritten because the funding was to be used in Escambia County only. This amount of \$20,000.00 was awarded on December 1, 1977 and the Census was started December 3, 1977 for the period of three (3) months ending March 3, 1978. This was for the payment of salaries for the workers and no supplies were to be purchased from these funds. This grant was administered by the Escambia County Department of Human Resources by the guidelines of Health, Education and Welfare. All the census workers were Indian decedents.

There has been other grants written but not funded due to the fact that we could not show the actual head count of the number of Indian people we were serving. Therefore it was very important for the census to be conducted.

During February a census was conducted in Santa Rosa County on February 11, 1978 and Okaloosa on February 25, 1978 by the Council members and other interested Indians volunteering their time on Saturday to conduct this census.

During the first year of the CETA TITLE III, Sec. 302 Grant for non-reserved Indians, ending September 30, 1977, there was a total of seventy (70) participants to enter into the program with twenty-one (21) to drop out of the program and thirty-nine (39) continued in the program with a total of 10 participants to complete the program and to become gainfully employed.

The CETA Grant was renewed for another year starting October 1, 1977 with the thirty-nine (39) participants on board at that time, but had to be reduced to twenty-seven because the funding was reduced and presently have twenty-seven (27) participants in school.

In December 1977 the Escambia County Commissioners moved our office to the present location which is Plaza Office Building, Room 414, Town and Country Plaza, telephone number 904-432-9639. We welcome you to come by the office.

NORTHWEST FLORIDA CREEK INDIAN COUNCIL

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

