

Understanding Dawnland Today: Land Acknowledgements!

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League of Women Voters of Maine
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Goals for Today

- Ask: What are Land Acknowledgements and Why are they necessary? What are the potential pitfalls? What are some examples?
- Explore University of Maine Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) related to cultural heritage items and Penobscot Language Signage Project as a way to fulfill the promise of land acknowledgement.
- Ask what other concrete steps the University of Maine and other institutions can take to fulfill the promise of land acknowledgements.



Some Thoughts on Defining Decolonization (Of Which Land Acknowledgement is Part)

What does it mean to reverse Colonialism and its effects?

"Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding."

-Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 1963, p. 36

"Decolonization is not a metaphor." It involves the repatriation of tangible things/authorities to indigenous peoples.

-Tuck & Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," 2012



What is a Land (or Territorial) Acknowledgement?

From Selena Mills, Cree, https://locallove.ca/issues/what-are-land-acknowledgements-and-why-do-they-matter/#.YWbOGC-cZdg

- •Land acknowledgements are an honest and historically accurate way to recognize the traditional Native American First Nations.
- •They can be presented verbally or visually and have one goal, regardless of format.
- •They commemorate Indigenous peoples' principal kinship to the land—and the fact that we have not and cannot be erased from her, our collective first mother the earth.
- •They're a starting place to a change in how the land is seen and talked about
- •They help redefine how people place themselves in relation to First Peoples of a land.



Why do a Land/Territorial Acknowledgement?

From Selena Mills, Cree, https://locallove.ca/issues/what-are-land-acknowledgements-and-why-do-they-matter/#.YWbOGC-cZdg

- •Land acknowledgements are a necessary and first step toward honoring the original occupants of a place. They also help people recognize and respect Indigenous peoples' inherent kinship beliefs when it comes to the land, especially since those beliefs were restricted for so long (American Indian Freedom of Religion Act of 1978).
- •When we're being honest about why land acknowledgements are important—it is recognition of the attempted genocide of Native Americans, which spans centuries.
- •They help provide a solid framework for reconciliation for the injustices that have been carried out against Indigenous communities: broken treaties, residential schools, extermination policies and continued attempts by government (federal, state and territorial) and religious groups to control resources.



How should you engage with a Land/Territorial Acknowledgement?

How should I react? (From John Bear Mitchell, Penobscot)

- •Be mindful of the thoughts that go through your head when you hear or see a land acknowledgement. "us and them" "we won" "we get to decide" "those people" "get over it" etc...
- •Digging deep to look at how our personal biases might contribute to discrimination can be tough, but the work of personal introspection isn't supposed to be easy.
- •Be honest with yourself about your first reactions and the commentary that ensues when we hear a land acknowledgement with our peers, or when kids talk about hearing them at school.
- •Today's land acknowledgements contradict what many of us were taught, even if we've been out of school for just a few years—not to mention with how our own American identity is reflected through our family histories.
- •Know that proving and understanding identity is something that Native Americans must do every day.



Ongoing Guidance for Land Acknowledgement

- •While a brief acknowledgement may work for some groups, others wish to add more intention and detail to acknowledgements. To thoughtfully prepare an in-depth acknowledgement requires time and care. You may find it helpful to reflect on and research questions such as:
- •Why is this acknowledgement happening?
- •How does this acknowledgement relate to the event or work you are doing?
- •What is the history of this territory? What are the impacts of colonialism here?
- •What is your relationship to this territory? How did you come to be here?
- •What intentions do you have to disrupt and dismantle colonialism beyond this territory acknowledgement?



Ongoing Guidance for Land Acknowledgement

From https://nativegov.org/our-story/the-land-we-are-on/

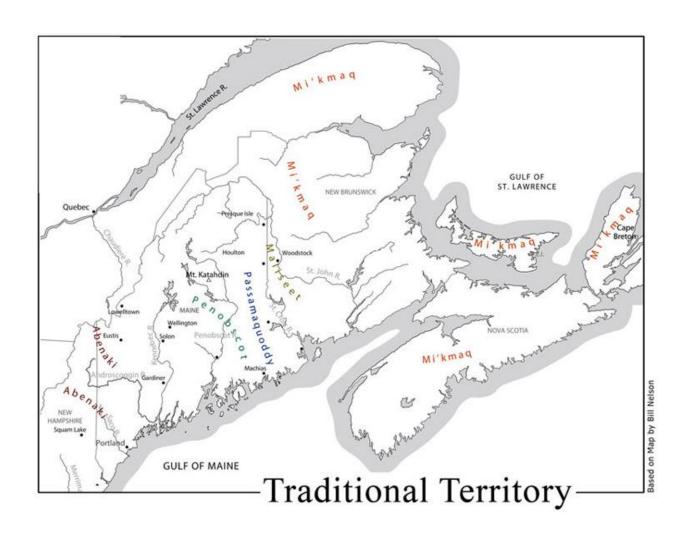
•"I'd like to move towards a territorial acknowledgement where you provide people with a sort of framework and then let them write it themselves. The really important aspect of a territorial acknowledgement for me, anyway, is this sort of obligation that comes on the back end of it."

Land acknowledgment is only one small part of supporting Indigenous communities. We hope our land acknowledgment statement will inspire others to stand with us in solidarity with Native nations.

Solidarity can look like:

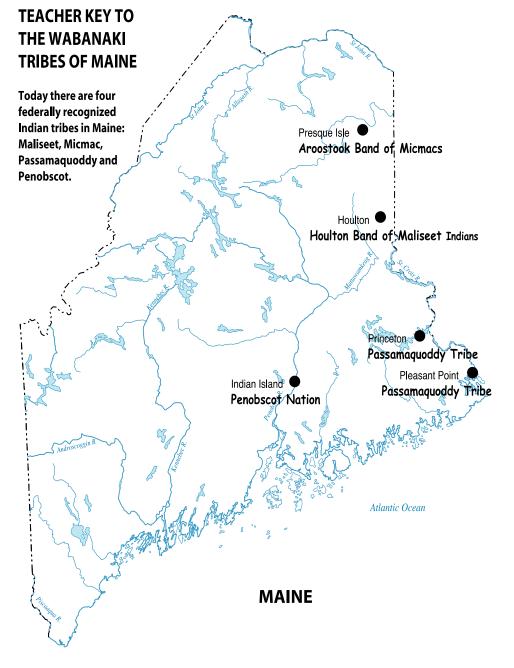
- Donating time and money to Indigenous-led organizations.
- Amplifying the voices of Indigenous people leading grassroots change movements.
- Returning land.

Wabanaki As a Place



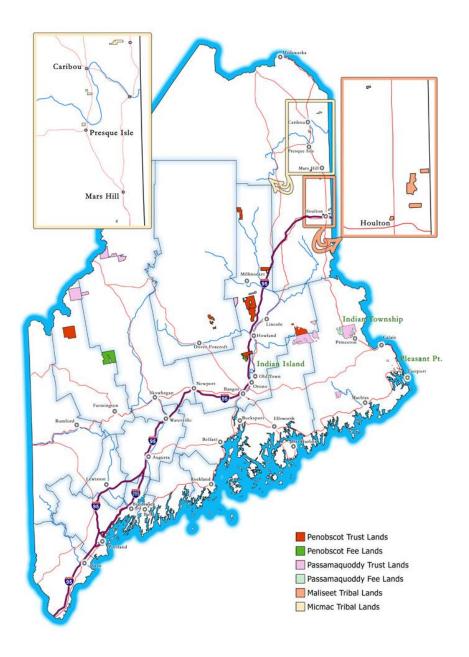
Wabanaki Territory-Reality
29 Mi'kmaq, 6 Maliseet Bands in Canada





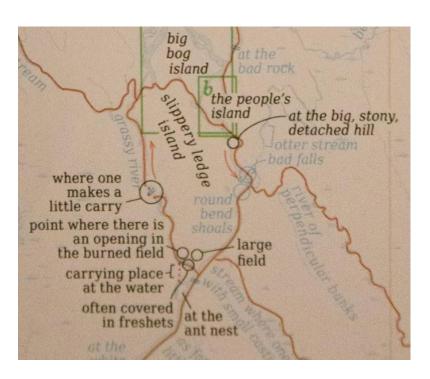
Wabanaki Tribal Nations in Maine





Wabanaki Lands and Tribal Nations in "Maine"

Wαpánahkik—"In the Dawnland"





Panawahpskewtakok- place where the rocks open up

Panawahpskewi-a person from where the rocks up



University of Maine Land Acknowledgement

The University of Maine recognizes that it is located on Marsh Island in the homeland of the Penobscot Nation, where issues of water and territorial rights, and encroachment upon sacred sites, are ongoing. Penobscot homeland is connected to the other Wabanaki Tribal Nations—the Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Micmac—through kinship, alliances, and diplomacy. The University also recognizes that the Penobscot Nation and the other Wabanaki Tribal Nations are distinct, sovereign, legal and political entities with their own powers of self-governance and self-determination.



Abbe Museum Land Acknowledgement

We are in the homeland of the Wabanaki, the People of the Dawn. We extend our respect and gratitude to the many Indigenous people and their ancestors whose rich histories and vibrant communities include the Abenaki, Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Nations and all of the Native communities who have lived here for thousands of generations in what is known today as Maine, New England, and the Canadian Maritimes. We make this acknowledgement aware of continual violations of water, territorial rights, and sacred sites in the Wabanaki homeland. The Abbe is honored to collaborate with the Wabanaki as they share their stories.



University of Maine, Darling Marine Center

•The Darling Marine Center recognizes that it is located in South Bristol along the Damariscotta River in the homeland of the Wabanaki Tribal Nations, where issues of water and territorial rights, and encroachment upon sacred sites, are ongoing. The historic Walinakiak Abenaki Tribe and other tribal peoples of the Pemaquid Peninsula area are connected to the modern, consolidated Abenaki Tribal Nation in Quebec and other Wabanaki Tribal Nations—the Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, Maliseet, and Micmac—through kinship, alliances, and diplomacy. The Darling Marine Center recognizes that the Wabanaki Tribal Nations are distinct, sovereign, legal and political entities with their own powers of self-governance and self-determination.



University of Maine, Farmington

- •We would like to begin by recognizing that the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) occupies the traditional homelands of the Abenaki people of Anmessokkanti, whose communities lived and sustained themselves along what we call the Sandy River for millennia until very recent times. We acknowledge that this community was largely displaced to Wôlinak and Odanak reserves in Quebec, Canada as a result of colonial warfare, and that their descendants remain there today.
- •The Abenaki people of western Maine are the original care-takers of this area, and maintain a sacred connection with it. We pledge to honor that relationship by educating ourselves about their history and current struggles, and by investigating our own responsibility to correct ongoing injustice. We wish to also extend this acknowledgement to the Maliseet, Micmac, Penobscot and Passamaquoddy nations who, with the Abenaki of Wôlinak and Odanak, make up the Wabanaki people.
- •We recognize and affirm the sovereignty of the Native nations in this territory and beyond. We recognize that sovereignty means the ability to self-govern, and to govern over one's homelands. We understand that this statement has real implications, and that decolonization is not a metaphor. We pledge to continue our collaboration with Wabanaki people to further decolonize spaces and to transform UMF into a place that honors Wabanaki and other Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge that this is an ongoing process in which the University of Maine at Farmington promises to partake, in partnership the many Indigenous individuals who have contributed to this important cause.



University of Southern Maine, Bertha Crosley Ball Center for Compassion

- •The BCB Center for Compassion is located in Portland, Maine, which was settled on the traditional territory of the Wabanaki Confederacy.
- •We recognize and honor the current Tribes who comprise the Wabanaki Confederacy—the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Micmac peoples—who have stewarded this land throughout the generations. We respect the traditional values of these Tribes and affirm their inherent sovereignty in this territory. We support their efforts for land and water protection and restoration, and for cultural healing and recovery.
- •We pause in remembrance of the Tribes of the Wabanaki Confederacy whose lives and land were taken through genocidal strategies of colonial settlement of this land.
- •We pay respect to elders both past and present, and we commit to the ongoing work of decolonization in Maine and beyond.
- •Yet it is not enough to simply say these words: we must take direct action as well.
- •The BCB Center for Compassion teaches contemplative practices designed to deepen compassion; these practices are a powerful tool in undoing systemic oppression and racism. We invite you to join us in this work. The resources below are a great starting point as you contemplate your position relative to the land you occupy, but we encourage you to dig deeper, as well--to seek out additional information and to build authentic connections within your own communities.



Problems/Issues/Possibilities in Land/Territorial Acknowledgements

Parody?

"Since we are so bad at genocide, we will now offer these heartfelt words of acknowledgement and apology for our presence in your homeland, yet will neither give the land back or do anything structural to change how we maintain our systems of colonial control over your lands, resources, and cultures."



Problems/Issues/Possibilities in Land/Territorial Acknowledgements

•"If we think of territorial acknowledgments as sites of potential disruption, they can be transformative acts that to some extent undo Indigenous erasure. I believe this is true as long as these acknowledgments discomfit both those speaking and hearing the words. The fact of Indigenous presence should force non-Indigenous peoples to confront their own place on these lands." – Chelsea Vowel, Métis, <u>Beyond Territorial Acknowledgements</u>



Problems/Issues/Possibilities in Land/Territorial Acknowledgements

From Debbie Reese, Nambe Pueblo, (https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2019/0 3/are-you-planning-to-do-land.html)

- •If you do one because you think you should, but that's as far as you go with it in your own thinking or what you impart to others, you're just doing it as a box-checked sort of thing that is no good.
- •If you're not mindful of what you are doing, then, you are turning a land acknowledgement into a token. It becomes an empty gesture to "honor" Native people. It becomes this century's mascot.
- •Find out what the nation(s) you are naming in your acknowledgement are doing, today. Tell your audience about it. Tell them how they can support that nation's work. See? That means you have to do some research so your Land Acknowledgement is meaningful.



Indigenous People and the University of Maine

Brief History

- ■First American Indian scholarship in 1934—for one male and one female member of both the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy Tribes.
- Expanded program in the early 1970s to more tribes and students, under the leadership of Ted Mitchell.
- Expanded again to all campuses in the mid 1980s.
- ■Creation of the Wabanaki Center in the mid 1990s (1994—by the Board of Trustees) and Native American Studies (1997—by the UMaine campus).
- Hiring of Second Faculty in Native American Studies (2003).
- Separation of Native American Studies from the Wabanaki Center (2004).
- Hiring of Third Faculty in Native American Studies (2009) (me).
- Hiring of adjunct to teach Wabanaki languages every semester.
- Hiring of indigenous archaeologist in Anthropology (2015) (non-Native American Studies appointment).
- A Single Space for Native American Programs (2016), Native American Faculty-student mentoring program, Synergistic Student Development Programs linking student research, Native community needs, internships, service learning (ongoing).





Penobscot Chief Kirk Francis and University of Maine President Susan Hunter, 10 May 2018



Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the Penobscot Nation and the University of Maine (Orono) Signed, May 10, 2018

"The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to formalize the various informal sets of practices that the Penobscot Nation and the University of Maine have been collaboratively developing for the management of Penobscot cultural heritage over the last ten years. This agreement indicates a commitment to extend and elaborate upon these for the mutual benefit of the Penobscot Nation and the University of Maine (Orono)."

"The University of Maine recognizes that the Penobscot Nation is a distinct, sovereign, legal and political entity with its own powers of self-governance and self-determination, and recognizes its place on Marsh Island in Penobscot Nation traditional territory."



The purpose of this MOU is to clarify Penobscot Nation and University of Maine (Orono) expectations with regards to the following discrete areas:

- University and Penobscot Nation Institutional Research Boards.
- 2. *Care and management of Penobscot collections and cultural heritage items held at the **Hudson Museum**.
- 3. *Care and management of Penobscot collections and cultural heritage items held at the Fogler Library (Special Collections).
- Publication of Penobscot Nation cultural heritage material through the University of Maine Press.
- Cataloguing and care of Penobscot collections in the Anthropology Department.



Where does this work come from??

- 1. Tribal Nation engagements/partnerships over years
- 2. Broad Institutional Needs/Priorities—
 Problems/Shortcomings in Intellectual Property and
 Repatriation Law
- 3. Clearly identified Roles/Responsibilities
- 4. To Support Wabanaki Tribal Nations work in Maine: For Collections Needs, Research Needs, Intellectual Property Challenges.



IRB and Research

Human Subjects
Monitoring
Compliance Justice
Beneficence Respect
Education
Research Research



Hudson Museum





Hudson Museum

Whereas, the Hudson Museum at the University of Maine holds collections important to the Penobscot Nation and has developed integrated formal and informal policies for managing these with consultation from Penobscot Nation representatives.

Therefore, the Hudson Museum will continue this commitment by providing a <u>permanent Wabanaki seat on the Hudson</u>

<u>Museum's Board of Directors</u> with preference for a Penobscot tribal member.

Therefore, the Hudson Museum and the Penobscot Nation will continue to <u>collaborate around the documentation</u>, <u>cataloguing and digital sharing of Penobscot collections</u> and items of cultural heritage to <u>further the establishment of</u>
Penobscot TK labels at the Hudson.

Fogler Library Special Collections





Fogler Library Special Collections

Whereas, the Raymond H. Fogler Library Special Collections holds collections important to the Penobscot Nation and is committed to developing a collaborative model of co-curation over these materials.

Therefore, the Penobscot Nation will work with the Raymond H. Fogler Library to produce <u>guidelines for inclusive decision-making</u> to assist in building a collaborative model <u>for permissions over use and circulation of Penobscot cultural materials</u>.

Therefore, the Raymond H. Fogler Library will work with the Penobscot Nation to implement the **Penobscot TK** (Traditional Knowledge) **Labels**.

Therefore, the Raymond H. Fogler Library and the Penobscot Nation will collaborate in devising a means for the Penobscot Nation to have an affiliated status in order to have remote access to online Library research databases including but not limited to Jstor and Hathi Trust.



Anthropology Department Collections





A Plan for Penobscot Language Signage on the University of Maine Campus

REPORT FROM THE
PENOBSCOT LANGUAGE
SIGNAGE COMMITTEE
MAY 2018



Transforming Space/Place: UMaine-Penobscot Signage Project 2018-



"At the University of Maine, English and Penobscot language signage will connect the deep past to the present moment in place, sparking the viewer's imagination through traditional place names." –UMaine Penobscot Signage Plan

"Where Indigeneity is invisible, signage is a moment of opportunity, a marker in time and space where unseen (and thus unvalued and un-included) places, people, languages, and historical narratives can be made visible, tangible, and meaningful to passersby. To build a sign is literally to build a landscape of inclusiveness, one where Indigenous language, culture, people, and traditional territories are recognized and valued."



<u>University of Maine Penobscot Language</u> <u>Signage Plan addresses:</u>

- 1) <u>Corrections to existing signage</u>: Penobscot signs that restore and correct Penobscot words, spellings, and meanings on existing campus signage
- 2) New signage at significant sites on campus: Signs that place Penobscot words and meanings in places of authority
- New signage that reorients the campus community in Penobscot space and time: Signs that teach viewers to see their position with respect to Penobscot history and the Penobscot landscape around them
- 4) New signage in the Wabanaki Center and Native American Program: Signs that empower Native American Programs to self-identify in the host indigenous language



Penobscot home nation is in the minds and hearts of the people.

When he talks them old time tales of hunting, mysteries, wendigo, and little people,

I know I am home.

When wind blows lullabies through the piney tree tops,

I know I am home.

When she's making medicine for someone in need,

When every act is done in that spirit,

You forget there was ever such a thing as greed.

When sun warms your body through the heart of the land And smiles play on our children's faces You can see the work of Gluscabe's hand...

> Carol Dana When No One is Looking



Penobscot language signs











Penobscot language signs

Hudson Museum

CUS

wəmihkolawema

"s/he reminds h/her"







[Hello—you are pleasing to the eyes]







Penobscot Chief Kirk Francis and University of Maine President Susan Hunter, 10 May 2018



Possible Reflections and Resources:

What information do you need to know to engage tribal communities?

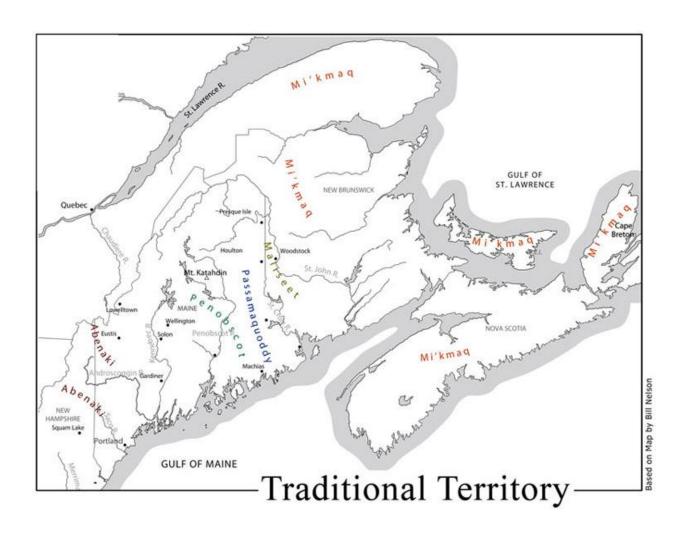
What changes need to occur at your institution to advance relationships with tribes?

What are the opportunities/barriers to your institution advancing relationships with tribes?

- •https://native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement/
- •https://nativegov.org/our-story/the-land-we-are-on/
- •<u>https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2019/03/are-you-planning-to-do-land.html</u>
- •<u>https://locallove.ca/issues/what-are-land-acknowledgements-and-why-do-they-matter/#.YWbOGC-cZdg</u>
- •https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/

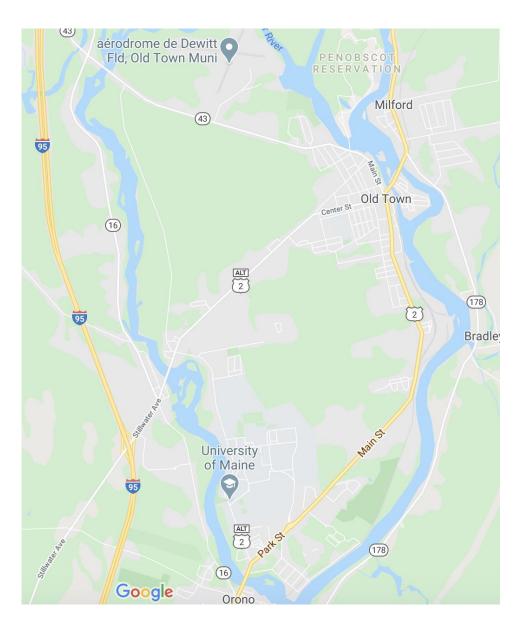


Wabanaki Place and Territory:

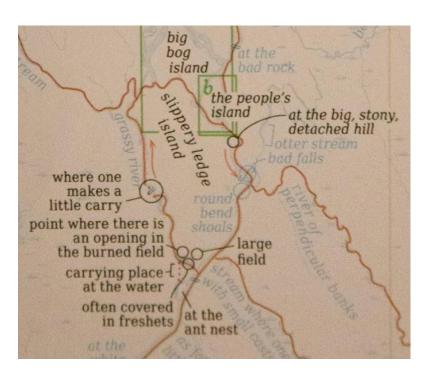


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Wαpánahkik—"In the Dawnland"





Panawahpskewtakok- place where the rocks open up

Panawahpskewi-a person from where the rocks up