

Changing Legacies:
First Light Learning Journey
for Board Members

Reading List



A note on readings

As you prepare for each *Changing Legacies* session, please set aside an hour to review the readings, podcasts, maps, and other resources in this document. We'll update course participants with materials two weeks before each session.

Each session includes a foundational set of resources, which should require no more than an hour to explore. We also offer a “deep dive” for each session if you have more time and interest to delve further into this topics.

These resources are all publicly available. Please reach out to ellie@firstlightmaine.org with any questions or issues around accessing resources.



Session 1: Setting Intention, Coming Together

Getting oriented to place

- [Wabanaki Today](#) - Arc GIS Map created by the Abbe Museum

Getting oriented to people

- [Wabanaki History](#) – Introduction to federally-recognized tribes from the Wabanaki Alliance
- [Wabanaki Commission Nil yut ktahkomiq nik](#) – Mission statement of the Wabanaki Commission
- [Invitation to Collective Action](#) – Overview and intentions of organizations working together as First Light

Challenging old narratives

- [This Land is Whose Land](#) – “If this is your first encounter with concepts like Native sovereignty, aboriginal title, and federal recognition, this article is for you...” by Mali Obomsawin

Session 1: Deep Dive

Deeper dive into the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, through the lens of Passamaquoddy history and presence in this land

- [Unsettled](#) – a 32-part series on by journalist Colin Woodard, published in the Portland Press Herald

How do Maine students learn (or not) about Wabanaki history and presence?

- [The Wabanaki Studies Law: 21 Years After Implementation](#) – a 2022 report from the Abbe Museum, ACLU of Maine, Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission, and Wabanaki Alliance outlining patchy implementation

Challenging old narratives (Holiday Edition)

- [The Real Thanksgiving Story](#) – History reassessed, an excerpt by Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz and Dino Gilia-Whitaker

Session 2: Healing Begins with Truth – Training Day with Wabanaki REACH

Heather Augustine and Barbara Kates from Wabanaki REACH shared these materials for participants to read in advance of *Pt 1. Healing begins with truth* and *Pt 2. Truth opens opportunities and responsibilities in our organizations*.

- [Land Back and the Passamaquoddy Tribe](#)- Dawnland Signals episode featuring hosts Maria Girouard and Esther Anne, and guests Donald Soctomah and Dale Mitchell.
- [Shifting to a Culture of Decolonization in Conservation Communities](#)– Post by Erica Buswell on Wabanaki REACH blog

Session 2: Deep Dive

[Beyond the Mandate: Continuing the Conversation - Report of the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth & Reconciliation Commission](#) - Wabanaki REACH began as the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission, tasked with uncovering the histories and experiences of Wabanaki youth with the state child welfare system, unearthing the truth to build towards healing. This is the expanded report from the Commission.

[This Land podcast, Season 2](#) - How do lawsuits around child adoption relate to Native sovereignty and the potential future use of Tribal lands and waters? Learn about how an ongoing dispute to the Indian Child Welfare Act, currently being heard in the Supreme Court, has implications for sovereignty, culture, oil & gas extraction, and more.



Session 3: A New Lens on Conservation

Increasing Wabanaki access to land goes hand-in-hand with conservation

- [Returning land to tribes is a step towards justice and sustainability, say Wabanaki, environmental activists](#)
– 2020 Maine Beacon article featuring quotes from many First Light collaborators

Even when returning land, conservation can still limit Indigenous decision-making around land

- [Let Native people decide regarding their traditional lands](#) –Peggy Berryhill digs into recent cases of land return, pointing out the persistence of conservation culture

Are there different ways to work in cross-cultural conservation?

- [Kihtahkomikumon](#)– 20-minute film from Sunlight Media Collective, depicting the return of Kuwesuwi Monihq and offering another way to work and think about land return



Session 3: Deep Dive

What are some dominant traits of conservation culture?

- [Becoming aware of cultural norms often seen in highly effective, white-led conservation organizations](#) – adapted from organizational culture work by Tema Okun

What have groups and individuals who work in cross-cultural conservation learned?

- [How to be an ally of Indigenous-led conservation](#) – core principles from conservation collaborations between First Nations and Canada
- [Essential Lessons](#) – reflections from Peter Forbes on First Light learnings



Session 4: This I Believe

We're changing it up a bit this session. *This I Believe* is an opportunity to think deeply about your values and learning and envision a world that reflects those values. This is a chance to build from your own past experiences to imagine futures that are more vibrant, fair, and sustaining than our status quo society presents. This is a session for dreaming— both hearing others' dreams and building your own.

To that end, start with reading some “This I Believe” statements from other conservation leaders:

- This I Believe(d) – [Ellie will email this to course participants in respect of the writer's privacy.]
- This I Believe – [Ellie will email this to course participants in respect of the writer's privacy.]

Then, spend some time with David Treuer's re-imagination of the future of our National Parks – you don't have to agree with Treuer, but what is the future he sees based on his values and learnings?

- [Return the National Parks to the Tribes](#) – Treuer's 2021 article in *The Atlantic*

Finally, and most importantly, spend time with your own values and learnings.

- What is it that you believe? What future does this inspire? Try putting it to words.

Session 4: Deep Dive

No additional readings this week– take the time to delve into your own values, learnings, and perspective, and a possible future built around that core.

Session 5: Wabanaki Voices on the Importance of Land Return

There is a deep interconnection between land and cultural vitality

- [They Carry Us with Them](#) – a short film featuring Richard Silliboy, Mi'kmaq leader and basketmaker, practicing basketmaking and speaking on survival of forests and culture (2021)
- [Indigenous Plant Knowledge: A Conversation](#) – article by Suzanne Greenlaw, with a focus on sweetgrass and access at Acadia National Park, for Wild Seed Project's publication (Volume 5, 2019)

Those deep cultural connections tie land return to justice in Wabanaki homelands

- [Returning land to tribes is a step towards justice and sustainability, say Wabanaki, environmental activists](#) – Maine Beacon article featuring Alivia Moore, Lokotah Sanborn, Darren Ranco, and Suzanne Greenlaw (Dec 2020).

Session 5: Deep Dive

If we are thinking about Wabanaki voice, we should think about Wabanaki language. What is the link between language, worldview, and the policies that structure our society? Gail Dana Saco's article begins by introducing language as a core part of who Tribes are and what they believe, then walks through some of Maine's history and present policies around Wabanaki Tribes, and suggests new policymaking that allows us to bridge our worldviews and build understanding:

- [Indigenous Voices Charting a Course Beyond the Bicentennial: Eba gwedji jik-sow-dul-din-e wedji gizi nan-ul-dool-tehigw \(Let's try to listen to each other so that we can get to know each other\)](#) - Maine Policy Review, 2020
- If you prefer, you can [listen to Gail read the article here](#).

The course is beginning to highlight questions of Wabanaki land access and climate change. To keep thinking along these lines, review Darren Ranco's presentation on Indigenous environmental activism.

- [Indigenous Climate Justice: From Wabanaki Territory to the World](#) – Presentation hosted by York Public Library, 2022

Session 6: Response-ability

Non-native organizations have the opportunity to respond starting from within. What can change about non-native organizations to work in better relationship with Wabanaki partners?

- [Becoming aware of cultural norms often seen in highly effective, white-led conservation organizations](#) – adapted from organizational culture work by Tema Okun

For many of our organizations, there is an immense feeling of urgency around responding to the climate crisis. But how does the need to move fast intersect with the time needed to work in good relationship with Indigenous people?

- Kyle Whyte, Potawatomi environmental justice scholar, grapples with this in the 2018 piece, [Too Late for Indigenous Environmental Justice?](#).

Responses that center reciprocity can be a touchstone for action.

- Robin Wall Kimmerer, Potawatomi scholar, traces a path towards reciprocity in the 2022 piece, [The Serviceberry: An Economy of Abundance](#).