

First Light

Learning Journey II
Program Overview

September, 2020- August 2021

Purpose and goals:

The purpose of the learning journey component of First Light is to grow awareness and to educate the larger conservation community about the need for expanding Wabanaki access to land:

After 350 years of colonization and broken treaties, the Wabanaki in Maine now have access to less than 1% of the land that once supported their place-based cultures. Maine's rivers and mountains may carry some Wabanaki names, but the people and the stories that those names belong to have been relegated to small reservations out of sight to most Mainers. In the last 50 years, land trusts in Maine have come to steward or own almost 23% of the land in the state which includes countless places of great importance to Wabanaki people and once stewarded by them.

Our long work is collaboration and reciprocity: we seek Wabanaki access and stewardship of land and we seek to create a stronger conservation movement that includes and reflects Indigenous expertise and perspective. Through expanding Wabanaki stewardship of land, we hope to grow the conditions for an on-going prosperity of Wabanaki language, culture and economy. All will benefit from this, and it all begins with the land.

A second goal of the learning journey is to expand the delegation of Maine organizations -public and private- who are committed to advancing First Light's mission of repairing and returning land at the speed of trust. This smaller group of conservation organizations is invested in collaborating directly with Wabanaki communities to meet our long-term goals.

First Light cannot achieve its mission without the active endorsement and participation of organizations and their leadership; therefore, our work is focused not just on individual learning and change but on organizational learning and change. First Light is about cultural prosperity for the Wabanaki and organizational evolution for the Maine conservation community.

Participation:

Participation in First Light learning journey is by organization, not by individual.

Each member organization will appoint 2 people to participate in the main branch of activities. There is a minimum of 2 people from each organization because every fire need two logs to burn and because we know that our goals rest on organizational change within our participant organizations. Each organization can send up to 5 staff to any event that is of topical interest.

We highly recommend that one participant be a senior staff member and one participant be a board member.

Participants are expected to attend all main branch programs in the course of the year. We will follow a “start and leave together” ethic, meaning that every one is expected to participate in all the program from start to finish.

Participants will be asked to commit to bring their learning back into their organization. We will provide examples and support for how to do this, and each participant will be encouraged to create a path in fostering organizational evolution that makes sense for their organization.

Program Overview:

The learning journey has 3 parts: individual learning, remote learning, and in person experiences as a group.

Participants are expected to read a provided list of a dozen articles, media and books in the course of the year which will be discussed as a group.

They will also be encouraged to pursue their own curiosity through a provided in-depth resource guide.

They will need to participate in 12 gatherings ranging from 1 to 3 hours, mostly over Zoom, over 12 months. Our programming will shift to remote events if necessary, to maintain social contract for keeping each other healthy and safe.

In May, 2021, interested participating organizations will provide field trips on conserved properties for Wabanaki participants to better understand resources and access opportunities.

The heads of their organizations will need to participate in the leadership gathering at Katahdin in June.

Learning Objectives:

- 🌀 A detailed understanding of the history of Wabanaki land loss and the conditions that have created the contemporary reality for Wabanaki people.
- 🌀 Be exposed to new ideas about relationship to place and nature that can change how you care for land.
- 🌀 In depth understanding of the tools and strategies that can be used in Maine to advance Wabanaki stewardship of land.
- 🌀 Detailed understanding of Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Micmac, and Maliseet needs around land and water and greater access to both.
- 🌀 Develop tools and strategies for advancing organizational change that will help you and your organization to be a strong leader for First Light’s goals.

☯ Strengthen conservation overall by combining local and traditional knowledge with western science.

☯ Ground all the learning experiences in specific places. Be on the land together and have human-to-human experiences that build understanding and opportunity for trust.

☯ Develop guiding principles for how to engage thoughtfully and reciprocally with Wabanaki communities.

☯ Have case studies from Maine and elsewhere of how and why conservation groups advanced indigenous access to land and sovereignty.

Examples/partial list of Core Books and Media to be read and discussed by participants:

Barry's Lopez's *Rediscovery of North America*

Colin Woodard's *Unsettled*

Tim Wise's *White Like Me*

Beth Rose Middleton's *Trust in the Land*

Peter Forbes' [Speed of Trust](#) and Essential Lessons

Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass*

Dina Gilio-Whitaker's *As Long as Grass Grows*

Examples of Focused discussion topics:

☯ Explore the connections between doctrine of discovery and manifest destiny as context for contemporary Native life.

☯ Explore how racism is expressed today toward Native Americans (ex: gaming, water rights)

☯ How does elitism and racism show up in land conservation in Maine today?

☯ What is conservation for today? What is our voice and how do we use it?

☯ Explore Native cultural and spiritual ties to nature alongside non-Native values toward nature and conservation and how this leads to different philosophies about relationship and stewardship.

☯ Explore the fine line between paying respect and cultural appropriation.

☯ What is the role of land acknowledgements in advancing this mission?

☯ How might visions for success in life be similar and different between conservationists and Wabanaki people? Where might greater collaboration take us?

☯ What is the difference between charity and reciprocity? How do these ideas shape how conservation groups engage with Wabanaki people?

- ☯ What are my own motivations for doing this work? Where do I hope it will take me?
- ☯ What are my organizations motivations for doing this work. Where it will it take our mission and our work in the future?
- ☯ What does sovereignty mean to Wabanaki people? What is land conservation's role in advancing Wabanaki sovereignty?

Learning Overview

- ☯ Understanding oneself in the work (Peter and others)
- ☯ Understanding different philosophies of stewardship (Wabanaki voices)
- ☯ Learning the History of Wabanaki Land Loss (Maine-Wabanaki REACH)
- ☯ Understanding trust and allyship (Maine-Wabanaki REACH)
- ☯ Understanding treaties and the Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act (Wabanaki voices)
- ☯ Solastagia and Blood Memory Today (Natalie Lolar and Tony Sutton)
- ☯ Taking Action, I: New Directions in Tribal Conservation (Beth Rose Middleton)
- ☯ Respect: Katahdin gathering (Wabanaki voices)
- ☯ Taking Action II: Organizational Change (Peter and others)
- ☯ Becoming Medicine for Each other (Wabanaki voices and land trust voices)
- ☯ Making Commitments

First Light Learning Journey

September 2020 – August 2021

2020
Sep

Opening Event: *Hands Working Together*
September 24, 25, 26

2020
Oct

Independent learning and reading month

2020
Nov

Maine-Wabanaki REACH workshop.
Over Zoom
Four days TBA

2020
Dec

Discussion of Treaties and the Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act
Over Zoom
One day TBA

2021
Jan

Solastagia and Blood Memory with Natalie Lolar and Tony Sutton
Over Zoom
January 7

2021
Feb

Second Cohort of the Learning Journey Call
Over Zoom
February 11, 2021

2021
Mar

New Directions in Tribal Conservation with Beth Rose
Middleton
One Day TBA

2021
Apr

2021
May

Warrior for Change: how to be leaders within our organizations for Wabanaki prosperity.
One day TBA

2021
Jun

Katahdin Gathering: Leadership summit
June 2, 3
New England Outdoor Center
Lake Millinocket

Organizational field trips throughout May to introduce Wabanaki colleagues to land trust lands.

2021
Jul

What will it take to achieve our vision: focus on organizational change? with Peter Forbes
One day TBA

2021
Aug

Concluding Event: Becoming Medicine for Each Other with Wabanaki guests
One day TBA