

**Chat Responses to Tony Sutton's question of First Light Learning Journey participants:
Why are you participating in First Light?**

Written June 10th, 2021

13:39:24 From Mark Berry to Everyone : To be a part of building momentum toward improvement

13:39:36 From Ethan Miller to Everyone : Because I can't be a whole person, and a good ancestor to my descendants, without doing work to repair colonial harm that my people perpetrated.

13:39:42 From Kat Deely to Everyone : Because it's the right thing to do, it's something we can do to move in a more positive direction away from all the wrongs our western culture has burdened Wabanaki people with.

13:39:46 From Ella McDonald to Everyone : This work gives me an opportunity to be a better ancestor and to disrupt harm, and to heal the land and ourselves.

13:40:24 From Isabel Ashton to Everyone : To have a chance to learn, listen, and build more permanency to relationships

13:40:40 From Abbie Bradford, MCV, she/her to Everyone : What Darren shared before - I think indigenous connection to land is needed for the survival and wellbeing of all of our children.

13:41:07 From Linda Swackhamer/OLT to Everyone : Like Jen Neptune said, I agree that the dam removals were inspiring to me, not only for the results, but for the example of a broad gathering of organizations and people could work together to make change. Here in Veazie, the old hydro is now a park and reminds us all everyday of what's possible. Thank you.

13:41:14 From Janet McMahon to Everyone : I agree that the voices of indigenous people are essential to helping us move toward a sustainable world. Sidelining and erasing those voices have led us to where we are today - a way of life that is completely out of balance.

13:41:31 From Kristin Peet to Everyone : I sometimes struggle to get beyond "it's the right thing to do," but I whole-heartedly believe that Indigenous people are the best people to direct us in the work we do and how best to not cause further harm to *all our relations.

13:41:50 From Jessica Burton (she/hers) to Everyone : It is about relationship to me - repairing and relearning our relationships to place and each other and using our power and privilege to change the ways we do things to be better and more connected - and to do it together for the added impact

13:41:55 From juanitaroushdy to Everyone : Because the land cries for help and understanding and only those close to it can help it heal and heal us as well, bringing us back to a place where we are not so egocentric but giving and understanding.

13:41:56 From Erica Cassidy Dubois (she/hers) to Everyone : My original interest stems from having the privilege of living in SE Alaska for a year. I came "home" to Maine and was really forced to confront how erased indigenous cultures have been, here, in comparison, and First Light was an opportunity to better understand how that occurred

13:41:57 From Tiffany Huenefeldt to Everyone : Learning to inform respectful action to restore connection to the land we all care about.

13:42:00 From Mary Barnes to Everyone : To have this knowledge, experience and understanding is essential to being a responsible land conservationist in this state

13:42:45 From Carl Costanzi, WFLT (he/him) to Everyone : I've learned that land can't be dissociated from the tribes that have been here for thousands of years, even if it has been physically. It's our responsibility to re-associate that physical connection for the benefit of every being.

13:42:53 From rebeccamarvil to Everyone : To listen and learn about important and long-lasting wrongs against people whose land we inhabit in order to take steps toward righting the wrongs.

13:43:13 From Don Lyons to Everyone : I have participated in the 2nd Cohort to learn, build relations to land and the people of this land, and heal. First Light offers a collective opportunity to build momentum.

13:43:17 From juliet altham to Everyone : Personally it is an opportunity and even relief to finally face and process that colonial 'shame' and transform it into my own responsibility and desire to be part of a better future. And I join in believing that this is also necessary - and the time is now - for the survival of all of us.

13:43:46 From Jocelyn Hubbell (she, her, hers) to Everyone : Here to learn, to build relationship, to repair, and to listen more and bring wholeness back to the way of being for all beings of the Earth. To work within my organization and community to share what I have learned... and to continue to listen and learn. This is an on-going commitment.

13:43:54 From Keisha Payson to Everyone : An opportunity to learn and change the colonial dynamic - an opportunity to change the vision for the future and opportunity to repair some of the injustices to Maine's native people.

13:43:55 From Denise St. Peter to Everyone : Professionally, for a better future for the land and waters that are important to our work. Personally, and relatedly, to gain a better understanding of the complex history of "home" and to help my children and the next generation with this perspective as well.

13:44:04 From GabrielaAlcalde to Everyone : Working together to repair harms done to people, animals, natural world is the only viable way forward. Current ways of existing is suffocating, oppressive and exclusionary to too many and we must start to broaden our sense of knowledge and reality. This is an important effort in more fully recognizing and acting upon the real interdependence of all.

13:44:22 From Hadley Couraud (she/her) to Everyone : Opportunity to learn, be humbled, cultivate relationships, and better place myself in the conservation of and connection to land and water and non-human life.

13:44:31 From Steve Dunham to Everyone : to learn and pass on what I have learned. Also, my job is to manage wildlife and department lands as a public trust. I can't do that job without understanding the needs of all people

13:44:35 From Doug Welch to Everyone : To learn and seek opportunities for enhanced Wabanaki access to the lands that we all enjoy but that are their homelands.

13:45:29 From jisbill to Everyone : I think an Indigenous person said "We are the ones we have been waiting for". This always feels emotional and right.

13:45:31 From Sam Brown to Everyone : We are all related, and need leadership which can authentically remind us of that, from the deepest source of human experience in this part of the planet.

13:45:42 From Maureen Drouin she/her MCA+MCV to Everyone : To understand better the history of colonization of this place where we live, to understand how we can partner on decolonization, and to build deeper relationships with each other.

13:48:04 From David Manski to Everyone : Here here with Suzanne's comments regarding developing relationship. Community conservation should be with all communities that involve long-term personal relationships and understanding.

13:50:33 From pollymahoney to Everyone : I love land, working with Native people and am amazed at learning more about the history of Maine where I grew up and had no idea of some of this history with Wabanaki people. I feel the "time is right" for First Light Learning Journey.

13:50:39 From Janet McMahon to Everyone : The concept of a more universal land conservatorship is truly inspiring.

13:51:42 From Daphne (she/her), Land in Common to Everyone : Yes. Healing.

13:54:11 From Jennifer Melville (she/her) OSI to Everyone : So hard to put into words an answer to this question...I love all the comments...Here is another attempt... To heal our relationship with all beings, with land and with each other, we need to find another way. The colonial way of consumption and transactions is doing such deep harm and creating such suffering. We have so much to learn as we listen to, learn from and perhaps even practice Indigenous ways of knowing and being

14:00:40 From Bryan Wentzell to Everyone : As humans, individually, and collectively the more connected to the land we are the better. How can we repair our relationship with this land and each other in a way that centers, respects, honors and empowers the people that have been here since time immemorial? Let us make the doing of this work well lead to long-lasting relationships, even as the results are realized by future generations.

14:01:24 From Megan Shore, She/her to Everyone : It is hard to find the right words. What comes is a calling to do better and recognition that I need to understand better to do so and change my own ways. I had the privilege of being at some of the Penobscot river dam removals and was deeply moved and inspired. The power in those events, the history, the visibility of the harm that was done and the surge of what is possible / what could be with healing.

14:11:47 From Ashley Bahlkow she/her Somali Bantu Community Association to Everyone : Oops, didn't press send on this from earlier: A calling to unlearn my socialized notions and brain reflexes vested in the colonial mentality (take them out of my subconscious) and instead listen and relearn how to see the world beyond an exploitative, colonizing, commodifying lens - part of this is to listen to and when I have opportunity to empower especially BIPOC folx who are teaching this in order to outgrow the current dominant cultural paradigms.