

Resources for beginning to understand the intersection of land conservation and engaging with indigenous communities for the conservation community in Massachusetts

(Revised from a First Light [resource](#) by Anna Wilkins, North County Land Trust, 2021)

Massachusetts Tribes

- Getting to know you...Whose land are you on?
 - Map of major tribal territories, settlements and trails in southern New England (compiled from historic data)
<https://ipswich.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/native-americans-map-header.jpg>
 - A summary and brief description of New England/Northeastern Tribes from the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association 2012 Conference: <https://www.umb.edu/naisa/tribes>
 - [Native Lands Searchable Digital Mapping Inventory](#)
 - [Territory Acknowledgements](#)
- There are two federally recognized Massachusetts Indigenous tribes:
 - [Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#)
 - [Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head \(Aquinnah\) of Massachusetts](#)
- The state of Massachusetts also recognizes the [Nipmuc Nation](#).
- There are many locally recognized tribal groups throughout Massachusetts (and across the Nation). Here is a list of a few:
 - [Assawompsett-Nemasket Band of Wampanoags](#)
 - [Council of Seven/Royal House of Pokanoket/Pokanoket Tribe/Wampanoag Nation](#)
 - [Covasuck Band-Abenaki People](#), also known as Covasuck Band of Pennacook Abenaki People
 - [Massachusett Tribe at Ponkapoag](#)
 - Quinsigamond Band of the Nipmucs
 - ...among many others.

Things to Consider While Doing Conservation Work

Recommended Reading:

- [Finding Balance at the Speed of Trust: The Story of the Sustainable Southeast Partnership](#) by Peter Forbes
- [Unseen Neighbors: Native Americans of Central Massachusetts, A People Who Had "Vanished"](#). University Press of New England, 1997.

Conservation will be strengthened by respecting and elevating Indigenous perspectives.

- [Indigenous Plant Knowledge: A conversation with Suzanne Greenlaw](#) (Suzanne Greenlaw)

- [Returning land to Tribes is a step towards justice and sustainability, say Wabanaki and environmental activists](#) (Emily Weyrauch, with quotes from Wabanaki organizers)
- [Sanctioned Theft: Tribal land loss in Massachusetts](#) *Cultural Survival Magazine, Issue 38-2 We are still here: Tribes in New England Stand their Ground, June 2014.*

Reconciling history is long and complex work and must be done with care.

- [The Danger of Social and Political Symbolism in the Advancement of Indigenous Rights](#) (Sherri Mitchell)
- [Shifting to a Culture of Decolonization in Conservation Communities](#) (Erica Buswell)

Examples of a recent projects to affirm and restore indigenous relationships to land in Massachusetts

- [Northeast Wilderness Trust & Native Land Conservancy Announce Partnership](#), By Leslie Jonas, Ramona Peters, and Jon Leibowitz, February 2021.
- [We Are On Native Land: The Native Names Project](#) (Kestrel Land Trust, June 2021)
- [Reclaiming a Lost River in Vermont](#), Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust, September 2020.
- [Mashpee Islands Gifted For Conservation](#), By Sam Houghton, Apr 5, 2019.
- Video: [Native Land Conservation Trust and Dennis Land Trust Cultural Respect Agreement](#), December 2016

Example of a recent projects to restore Wabanaki land stewardship:

- [A significant return of land stewardship to the Penobscot Nation](#) celebrates their history and cultural resilience and serves to inspire similar land returns.
- Some work that is happening at the intersection of land conservation and Indigenous people:
- [“About” First Light](#), an effort to build bridges between Wabanaki and conservation.
- [First Light’s Conservation Community Delegation](#) and the [Wabanaki Commission Wabanaki Alliance](#), formed in June 2020 to help secure sovereignty of the tribes in Maine. [Wabanaki REACH](#) offers workshops for conservation organizations on Decolonizing Conservation Communities.
- Conservationists and Indigenous people are working together in [California](#), [Alaska](#), and [nationally](#).

Note: This list of links and resources is not exhaustive. I welcome your feedback, updates, and input. Please email Anna Wilkins at awilkins@northcountylandtrust.org