

2021 Massachusetts & Rhode Island Land Conservation Conference

Land Acknowledgement

It is important that we as a land conservation community acknowledge and reflect on the fact that we endeavor to conserve and steward lands that were forcibly taken from Native people. Indigenous tribes, nations, and communities were responsible stewards of the area we now call Massachusetts and Rhode Island for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans, and Native people continue to live here and engage in land and water stewardship as they have for generations. Many non-Native people are unaware of the indigenous peoples whose traditional lands we occupy due to centuries of systematic erasure.

I am participating today from the lands of the Pawtucket and Massachusett people. On the screen I'm sharing a map and alphabetical list – courtesy of Native Land Digital – of the homelands of the tribes with territories overlapping Massachusetts and Rhode Island. We encourage you to visit [their website](#) to access this searchable map to learn more about the Indigenous peoples whose land you are on.

Especially in a movement that is committed to protection, stewardship and restoration of natural resources, it is critical that our actions don't stop with mere acknowledgement. White conservationists like myself are really only just beginning to come to terms with the dispossession and exclusion from land that Black, Indigenous, and other people of color have faced for centuries. Our desire to learn more and reflect on how we can do better is the reason we chose our conference theme this year: **Building a Stronger Land Movement through Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.**

We look to highlight and elevate voices from marginalized communities in a number of sessions during this conference and encourage you to attend those sessions or watch the recordings later if you cannot get to them live. Some of these topics and perspectives may be new to many attendees and we encourage you to engage with them with an open mind.

Those of us involved in land conservation in Massachusetts and Rhode Island need to do far more to make our work more equitable, just and inclusive to serve all members of our communities. This work can't end when the conference is over. We hope the speakers and sessions during this conference challenge and motivate you to take meaningful action to further these goals.

This land acknowledgement was composed based on resources from Native Land Digital's [interactive map](#) and accompanying [education guide](#) and from the [Native Governance Center](#), with input from Eric Wuesthoff, Lizz Malloy, Rupert Friday and Robb Johnson, and delivered verbally by Robb Johnson at the 2021 Massachusetts and Rhode Island Land Conservation Conference.



Native Tribes and Organizations in our Region

- [Abenaki Council of Odanak](#)
- [Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi](#)
- [Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook Abenaki People](#)
- Eastern Nehântick People
- [Elnu Abenaki Tribe](#)
- [Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe](#)
- [Manissean Tribe](#)
- [Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation](#)
- [Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#)
- [Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag](#)
- [Mattakeeset Tribe of the Massachuset Indian Peoples](#)
- [Mohegan Tribe](#)
- [Narragansett Indian Tribe](#)
- [Nipmuc Nation](#)
- [Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe](#)
- Pawtucket/Pennacook People
- Pentucket People
- [Pocasset Wampanoag Tribe of Pokanoket Nation](#)
- Pocumtuc People
- [Pokanoket Tribe of Pokanoket Nation](#)
- [Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag](#)
- [Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians](#)
- [Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head \(Aquinnah\)](#)
- [Tomaquag Museum](#), Exeter, Rhode Island

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in Land Conservation

The Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition's website includes a [List of DEI resources](#) relevant to our field, which we hope to add to and improve over time. We encourage you to explore these resources and contact us at info@massland.org with feedback or additional resources that may be helpful to others.