



NATIVE LAND CONSERVANCY



Welcome Autumn - Indigenous Day 2021

Meet our new Director, Diana Ruiz, Conservation Scientist
New MA Conservation Restriction Model recognizes Indigenous lifeways
Northeast Wilderness Trust Partnership

LUMINARY FRIEND OF THE NLC

I first met Chuck Sams at an event in Maine with mutual friend, Peter Forbes. Peter is an insider in the Land Conservation movement working closely with the Wabanaki Confederacy on their homelands in Maine, and is the co-founder of the First Light Learning Journey with Ciona Ulbrich.

First Light was created to focus on understanding the history of the land loss in Maine and how to pave a pathway forward in making amends.

Peter asked Chuck Sams and I to co-present to 21 land trust representatives and tribal leaders from the Wabanaki Confederacy to establish relationships that could lead to sharing the land. The Wabanaki representatives were from the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Mi'kmaq Tribes. Sharman Brown, NLC Board Secretary, and I, representing the NLC, drove up from the Cape to participate. Chuck Sams is the former director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon as well as a current representative member of the

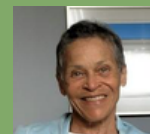


From left to right: John Dennis, Ramona Peters, Peter Forbes, Chuck Samms

Northwest Power and Conservation Council. He is the first Native American to be nominated for the National Park Service director post under first Native American Interior Secretary, Deborah Halland, Laguna Pueblo tribal member.

Chuck and I have also collaborated and presented at this past summer's June Land Trust Alliance Conference on the topic, "Making Connections with Indigenous Communities".

I am very proud of the work Chuck has accomplished in serving indigenous communities in his lifetime and know that he will bring incredible value and promise to his new role as National Park Service Director in the Department of Interior.



Ramona Peters, Chairwoman
Native Land Conservancy

SPOTLIGHT NEW NLC DIRECTOR

Diana Ruiz, Ph.D. - NLC Conservation Scientist

The NLC circle grew when it selected Diana Ruiz as its first employee and Director in August. Diana found her passion for land conservation through her mentorship with cattle ranchers, Jim and Shirley Modini, in her home state of California. Diana witnessed their decision to entrust a local land trust with their 1,700-acre ranch.

After their passing, Diana joined the Board of Directors of the land trust, serving as its Vice President, Secretary, and Chair of the Governance and Nominations Committee. Diana carried the burning conservation ethic the Modinis instilled in her to conservation projects around the world, from implementing sustainable crop rotation alongside the indigenous Shuar people of the Amazon, to researching humpback whales in Madagascar.

Diana fulfilled her first-generation American Dream when she earned her Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of California Santa Cruz. Her parent's left the poverty of rural Mexico, where its lineage to a specific native group had been lost. In her own words, "I am beyond honored to be entrusted with guiding the NLC in its mission to rescue land and perpetuate indigenous lifeways.

"While my cultural experience has been different from many NLC constituents, we are united by our values of ecological conservation and land justice. I am most excited by the NLC's uniquely innovate and compassionate approach to ensuring that all living beings – especially indigenous people – may share a reciprocal relationship with nature."

Diana lives in West Dennis with her husband, Dave Fryxell, Land Manager at Dennis Conservation Land Trust, and her two dogs, Pepe and Rio.

NLC Chairwoman, Ramona Peters, and Vice-chairwoman, Leslie Jonas, couldn't be happier with this new role and look forward to the contributions that Diana's past work and experience will bring to the future success of the NLC.

Welcome to the NLC Diana!



MA CONSERVATION RESTRICTION

Indigenous values now officially recognized in MA state Conservation Restriction model

In our last newsletter we posted a brief announcement about the new Massachusetts Conservation Restriction language. In a way it was misleading to suggest that this new designation is exciting news just for the indigenous people of the Wampanoag, Nipmuc, and Stockbridge nations of this region because it is also exciting news for homeowners, towns, and conservation trusts.

As of June 11th, 2021, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts honors indigenous cultural landscapes by including important new language in its descriptions/criteria for Conservation Restrictions under Purposes, Acts and Uses. A Conservation Restriction (CR) is a voluntary agreement that enables the owner to retain privacy and title to the land while removing some development rights in all or part of the property.

The diminished value of the land becomes a deduction against 50% of adjusted gross income each year for up to 16 years. Property tax reduction is considerable, if building sites are extinguished.

The Premise is identified as an indigenous sacred site or cultural landscape with cultural attributes relevant to the intrinsic values of contemporary tribal communities within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The unique status of Indian tribes in the history of the United States, protecting our spiritually and culturally important sites has historical value for the nation as a whole. Preserving sacred sites and places of cultural significance are essential for the continuation of traditional Native American cultural or religious practices. This important new language in its descriptions/criteria for Conservation Restrictions under Purposes, Acts and Uses, may be the first of its kind in the United States.

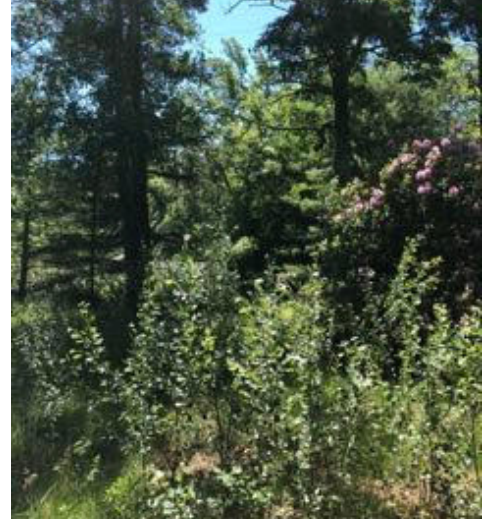
These inclusions provide a means for indigenous people to protect culturally significant landscapes, features, and gain access for specialized foraging and ceremony through partnership with landowners, municipalities, and conservation groups.

This is a huge statement of recognition and sensitivity to the intrinsic values of indigenous people of Massachusetts. We are thrilled and we will reach out to different tribal communities on these wonderful new conservation restriction provisions.

• Wetlands. The [Enter type of wetland] for a diverse array of wildlife species. Wetlands protection recognized by Chapter 131 of the Massachusetts Code of Regulations.

• Indigenous Cultural Landscape. [Enter type of landscape] protection of an area important to the intrinsic values of contemporary tribal communities identified by _____ as an Indigenous Cultural Landscape of Massachusetts.

Working Farmland and/or Forest Land. open fields and forests containing agriculture and forest resources.



THOUGHTS FROM OUR NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH NEWT

Northeast Wilderness Trust and NLC

The Northeast Wilderness Trust (NEWT) and the NLC are partnering to build something bigger than any organization can be on its own. The two land trusts came together in 2018 when NEWT acquired its 322-acre Muddy Pond Wilderness Preserve in Kingston, MA. NEWT's Executive Director, Jon Leibowitz, began reaching out to local stakeholders, including the Wampanoag Tribes as the Preserve on its ancestral homelands. Through this outreach, Jon met Ramona Peters, Mashpee Wampanoag Elder and NLC Chairwoman, and Leslie Jonas, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Member and NLC Vice-Chairwoman. What emerged is an intentional collaboration that demonstrates a model for future cross-cultural conservation partnerships.

A blog post coauthored by Leslie, Ramona, and Jon describes the first milestone on October 24th, 2020, when "NEWT's Board passed a Corporate Resolution honoring the Wampanoag's cultural connections to the Preserve and stating its eagerness to 'develop an enduring, honest, and good relationship built on trust and reciprocity with the Native Land Conservancy.'" This was followed by a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two organizations on March 3rd, 2021. The MOU outlined mutually held objectives including: NEWT's intention to enter into a Cultural Respect Easement with the NLC on the Preserve, NEWT's intention to donate a forever-wild conservation restriction over the Preserve to the NLC, NEWT's intention to launch a paid internship, and a joint communication plan.

Since then, the partners have made strides towards their goals. NEWT and the NLC have begun drafting the Cultural Respect Easement, which would allow indigenous cultural practices on the Preserve. NEWT has hosted a native intern and is consulting with the NLC on how to enhance the next summer's program. The blog post is one of four installments, with the second in development. Further, the organizations have jointly applied to grants to support this work.

Today, new meaning is given to the partnership as the NLC is slated to be NEWT's neighbor with an impending land donation of 32 acres. The land bordering NEWT's Preserve will be Wampanoag Nation Common Lands, guaranteeing that descendants are welcomed back to their ancestral homelands. This has created a unique opportunity to reciprocally donate conservation restrictions between adjoining land protection groups.

The partnership between NEWT and the NLC is rooted in authenticity and respect. A crucial part of the process is open communication based on trust. Blog post:

<https://newwildernesstrust.org/native-land-conservancy-partnership/>



SPLASH! SAVE WAKEBY POND

NLC supports Wakeby Pond

On September 12th, the NLC showed its support for two important community events. One highlighted event near and dear to our hearts is Saving Wakeby Pond - "Let's Make a Splash" Event where Darius Coombs from the Tribe's Education Department launched a muhsh8n (Wampanoag canoe) made on their ancestral homelands in Mashpee. During this past summer, tribal youth worked closely with Darius to burn and scrape a 12' muhsh8n. The muhsh8n launched during the Splash event on that Sunday in Mashpee Pond for the first time since the 1970s; a truly historic event.

Darius Coombs, one of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's culture keepers, maintains that it's really important our youth participate in as many traditional cultural projects as possible to keep our culture alive, and he plans to continue to teach the youth everything he's learned throughout his entire life.

Ramona and Diana participated in the "Let's Make a Splash" event hosted by the Save Mashpee Wakeby Pond Alliance by showing their support for the swimmers and paddlers. Swimmers and paddlers followed a route from Attaquin beach to Ryder Beach to raise awareness for the imperiled health of Cape Cod's largest freshwater pond system. The alliance seeks to protect the pond from pollution through education, water quality monitoring, and advocating for a centralized sewer system.

Town of Mashpee Selectman and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council member, David Weeden, pictured here with Ramona, was among the swimmers to complete the 3-mile swim in the waters known for their currents. Wakeby in the Wôpanâak language is wâ-ku-pee, meaning "moving water," as in churned up or stirred up.

The Wakeby Pond is home to three NLC islands: Jefferson, Cleveland and Keith, gifted by the Lipnosky Family Trust.

One of the NLC's first properties acquired, the Wakeby Preserve donated by the Sandwich Conservation Trust, overlooks the pond. Beyond its physical stakes in the Mashpee Wakeby pond, the NLC is proud to support community partnerships, like the alliance, to maintain healthy waterways for all who rely on them.

