



NATIVE LAND CONSERVANCY



Welcome Winter 2023

Land and Wildlife Care

10th Annual Meeting and Anniversary

Meet Paula Peters, NLC's new Communications and Programs Coordinator

THOUGHTS FROM THE CLERK

Winter (Pup8n)

Native people value the importance of oral tradition. Generations of winters spent sharing stories that teach moral values, stories that remind us how to live on this land, and stories that keep us connected to the past. Our Ancestors spent the winters warm and cozy in their weekash (bark-covered houses); multi generations supporting each other through the cold days and nights. We celebrated the hard work of the previous seasons toil and labor that brought us the best each season such as sun-dried berries and nuts, corn, beans and squashes from the women's gardens lovingly dried and stored. In winter, the men would hunt and provide fresh meat for families. These stories were told in different ways through song and dance, through funny anecdotes and tales that can scare children to behave in a positive way. Winter was also a time to teach the creation stories. When referencing our creation stories, my favorite to share is the story of Maushop. Maushop the giant once lived on what we now call Cape Cod. Maushop was a friend to the

Wampanoag showing them how to make all that they needed to live with the land, from hatchets to clothes. Eventually there came time when the People of the First Light were visited less and less by Grandfather Sun. This caused great distress. The dark days drove their children indoors and wilted their crops. The people called upon Maushop for his help as his height might let him reach Grandfather Sun's ear more readily. Faithfully, Maushop marched east into the sea to approach Grandfather Sun when he first rose. Seeing his brilliant face, the giant called out, only to be ignored and cloaked in darkness. Day after day, Maushop pleaded. Finally, crafting a large net from seaweed, he captured the star. Maushop asked for forgiveness for his intrusion and explained his desperation. To Grandfather's surprise, Maushop described the Wampanoag's deep sorrow for his absence.

You see, Grandfather Sun had been forgotten by the people. Not a single word was spared for him when he arrived each morning nor during the day,

causing him profound grief. Maushop promised to teach the people how to tend to their Grandfather, should he give them another chance, and released him back into the sky.

With Maushop's guidance, the Wampanoag learned to show their thanksgivings to their Grandfather with morning greetings and offerings. A new relationship was shaped between people and star, allowing the crops to flourish once again, and balancing the seasons across the years.

However, Maushop's final lesson came directed by the Creator. He was told that to teach the Wampanoag self-sufficiency, he must leave them to rely on themselves. And so dutifully, he bade farewell to those he loved, diving into the waters, and being transformed into a white whale.



Kitty Hendricks, Board Clerk

LAND CARE

Invasive Plant Removal by NLC Fellow Olivia Kurz

Disturbance from the demolition of 15 structures on the Wampanoag Common Lands earlier this year has encouraged the growth of invasive plants. These non-native species crowd out our native plants and limit habitat for our native animals, including endangered species. As part of my work with us this summer, I helped devise some short and long-term strategies for invasive plant control. We wanted to begin this work right away, before the invasives spread further. On Tuesday, August 2, NLC hosted our first Invasive Plant Removal Day at the Wampanoag Common Lands. Gail, Marlene, Ramona, and Kitty from the NLC board joined as well as community members. We were also joined by a reporting team from the Associated Press who interviewed folks and documented our land care work for [an exciting article and accompanying video](#) highlighting the growing movement of Indigenous-led land repair. We focused our work on removing aggressive knotweed and bittersweet, working hard in the sweltering heat, pulling and cutting, ultimately filling over 15 yard bags of non-native weeds. Thank you to those already mentioned and Asa, Fin (Chloe), Marisa, Becky, Diana, Justin, and Jessica!

Two weeks later on August 16, we hosted a second Invasive Removal Day to continue our work. We were lucky enough to have a much cooler day this time! We were joined by a wonderful group of folks, including staff and volunteers from the Dennis Conservation Land Trust who helped remove an entire patch of non-native bittersweet, and cut down some black locust trees. Matt and Mike from the Town of Kingston Conservation Department helped us cut down a large swath of knotweed that was poised to expand. We also removed some prickly Japanese barberry and multiflora rose. The invasive plants are now bagged and tarped and will dry out onsite. Once dry, the NLC will burn them so that they don't resprout. We are so grateful for your support and look forward to many more days caring for this beautiful land.

Thank you to all who attended and especially those who helped plan and set up, including Marisa, Jessica, Diana, Dave, and Olivia.



WILDLIFE CARE

Building Bat Boxes by NLC fellow Jessica Tran

Bats are unique creatures. While some people think that they are blood thirsty, disease ridden, and scary animals, this summer I learned how amazing bats actually are. They eat mosquitos, pollinate plants, disperse seeds, and their guano (aka poop) creates prized fertilizer.

In Massachusetts there are nine types of bats. Some reside in the state year-round, while others are migratory. Five of these bats, the Northern Long-Eared Bat (federally threatened), tri-colored bat (endangered in Massachusetts), big brown bat, silver haired bat, eastern red bat, and hoary bat, have been documented at the Wampanoag Common Lands.

Bats love living in tight, dark spaces such as trees or caves. But they also like living in buildings. In 2021 when many buildings were removed from the Wampanoag Common Lands, this took away a source of shelter.

To remediate this, on August 9, 2022, the Native Land Conservancy had a working day to build 4 bat boxes to install on the Wampanoag Common lands. Each bat box has 3 chambers for 200-300 bats to roost in. Next summer NLC will install them, and hopefully in the next few years we will see more bat activity on the Wampanoag Common Lands!

Monitoring our Earth Mother

Protecting our four-legged relatives requires knowing the species that share our land and understanding how they use it. To familiarize ourselves with these, we have begun long-term monitoring. At the Wampanoag Common Lands and beyond, we have deployed six wildlife cameras. As part of his internship with the NLC and the Northeast Wilderness Trust, Justin Pikulski used these cameras for his wildlife habitat use study, recording nearly 5,500 hours! His findings revealed new neighbors, like a pair of river otters and fisher cats, as well as the importance of habitat variability. Additionally, our partners at Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance loaned us ultrasonic bat call recording equipment, enabling us to record nearly 30 nights. Next summer, we plan to continue recording and to train an intern to analyze these data. Beyond telling us which bats are present, this project will allow us to correlate environmental measures like temperature with bat activity. We are gearing up for other forms of unintrusive monitoring including acoustic sound recorders that detect birds, frog, and other vocal animals and data loggers to keep an eye on our waters' health.



PC: Michael Durham/Minden Pictures



NLC EVENTS

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Powwow

NLC was thrilled to table at the 101st Mashpee Powwow. Board members Gail Melix and Hazel Currence, Herring Pond, and Marlene Lopez, Rabbit Clan Mother of Mashpee, participated in Grand Entry, carrying signs that read WATER IS LIFE. All enjoyed dancers from all over the continent and the world. With support from board members, interns, staff and volunteers, and we shared about our work, including land rescue and land care. We are grateful for the time and support of everyone who helped make this weekend a success. Thank you Hazel, Gail, Leslie, Fin, Marisa, and Olivia!

Swim for Life

On September 10th, we were fortunate to be a beneficiary for the 35th annual Provincetown Swim for Life & Paddler Flotilla. This community fundraiser hosted by the Provincetown Community Compact raised awareness and over two hundred thousand dollars for local nonprofits. Lending a hand to distribute the Mermaid Brunch provided by Far Land Provisions, we met the 235 swimmers, 80 kayakers, and dedicated volunteers who made the event a success.

Wampanoag Cultural Celebration Day

On October 2nd, we returned to Highfield Hall & Gardens for their second annual recognition of the culture and history of local tribes. The day featured Indigenous food, vendors, music, and family-friendly activities like making quahog shell rattles and dancing led the Wampanoag Nation Singers and Dancers.

Indigenous Artisan Festival

On December 4th, we met at Pilgrim Hall for its first public day dedicated to Indigenous artisans and community organizations. We were joined by diverse artists, crafters, and attendees, including corn doll maker Eleanor "Toodie" Coombs, historian Linda Coombs, and Chairwoman of the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, Melissa Harding Ferretti. We hope you'll join us next year!

Apply for Native American Residency

We are pleased to announce an offering from our partners, the Provincetown Community Compact, of a free, week long residency in one of their dune shacks October 22-29, 2023. Apply for the lottery by February 28th: <https://form.jotform.com/thecompact/2023-native-american-dune-shack>



CELEBRATING PAST AND FUTURE

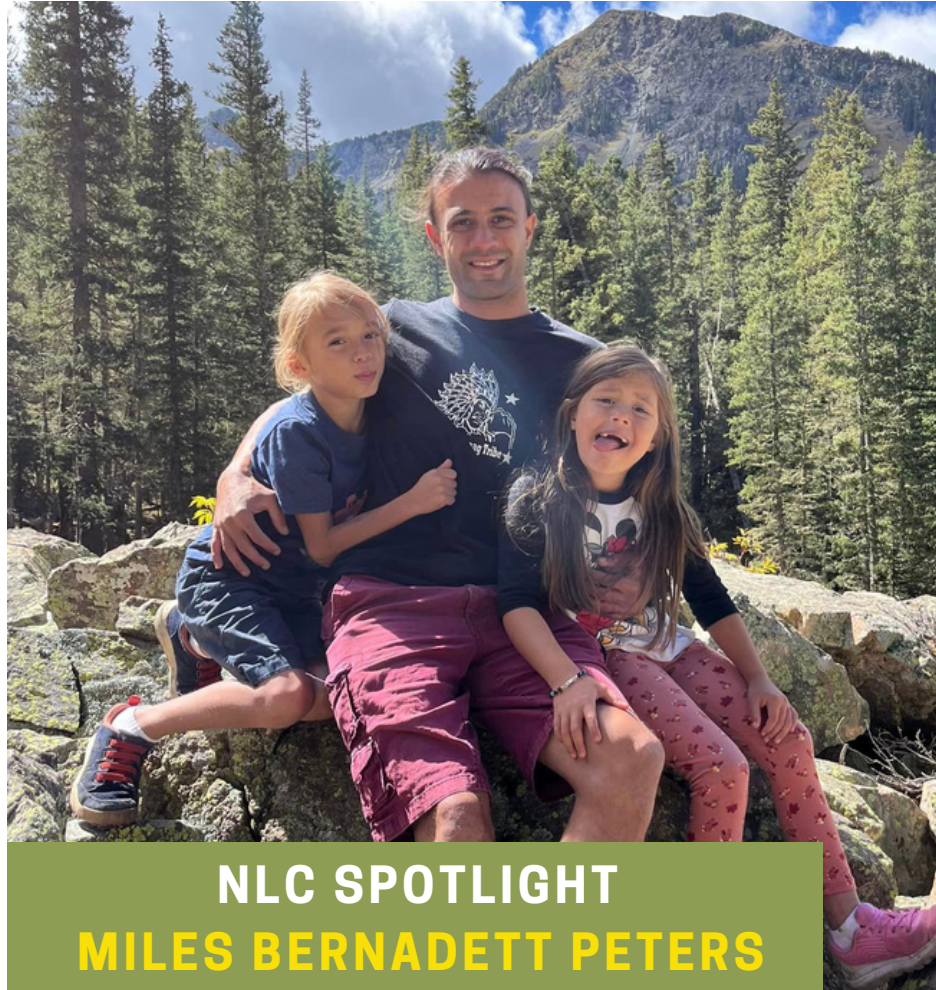
10th Annual Meeting and Anniversary

On October 7th, we gathered for our 10th Annual Meeting and Anniversary. We were overjoyed to celebrate our first in-person annual meeting since 2020 with nearly 70 NLC members, partners, and friends. As attendees arrived, they were greeted by instrumental music composed by Asa Peters and wafts of delicious quahog chowder and three sisters succotash by Sherry Pocknett from the Sly Fox Den Restaurant. Guy Cash Jr., the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's Medicine Man, thoughtfully opened the evening with a reminder of the importance of connection to land. Remarks by President, Ramona Peters, former Vice-chairwoman, and current Treasurer, Leslie Jonas, Executive Director Diana Ruiz, and Board Member Gail Melix followed to recount our decade-long history and highlights from the previous year. Standout milestones included: signing the first cultural respect agreement on the east coast in 2016, going national to assist a Maskoke land and language reclamation effort, influencing State conservation restriction models to include Indigenous Cultural Practices, expanding the area of land we protect, hiring our first staff member, and developing our strategic plan. Above all, we held space to honor our land and financial donors and celebrate our conservation partners, without whom our work would not be possible.

Welcome Paula Peters!

We are delighted to announce hiring Paula as our Communications and Programs Coordinator. In this vital role, Paula will advance all areas of our public outreach, from our website relaunch to our expanded calendar of events. Paula brings 30 years of experience as an author, journalist, and media producer. An active citizen of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Paula has dedicated her expertise towards projects centering political, social, and cultural advocacy. Her career is punctuated by compelling achievements, including a decade as a journalist for the Cape Cod Times, producing the traveling exhibit "Our" Story: 400 Years of Wampanoag History, The Wampum Belt Project, and co-owning and operating SmokeSignals, a Wampanoag creative production agency with her son, Steven Peters. Executive Director, Diana Ruiz, comments "Paula's wealth of talent and sincere motivations perfectly position her to help the NLC reach its targets to amplify our message and meet the needs of the communities we serve." Paula lives with her husband and children in Mashpee, Massachusetts.





NLC SPOTLIGHT MILES BERNADETT PETERS

MILES BERNADETT PETERS, MASHPEE WAMPANOAG NLC BOARD DIRECTOR

Mashpee Wampanoag NLC Board Director, Miles Bernadett Peters, is a Mashpee native, who has lived a coastal life in all 4 directions. Visits home enriched his younger life as an eastern woodlands man, which meant that he roamed the Mashpee woods and river searching for all of the natural things that brought him comfort and a deep sense of his culture; something he now shares with his 2 children, Meekonuk and Weekanushq. Most weekends, one can find Miles working on a muhsh8n (pron: mushoon, a Wampanoag dugout canoe), or teaching our youth how to flesh and tan a hide. It's important to him to inform and educate the littles about their history and culture, always instilling a sense of responsibility to its preservation. Miles attended Portland State University where he achieved his Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture, minoring in Indigenous Nation Studies.



He moved home to Mashpee shortly after college and in 2016, became a residential designer for Jill Neubauer Architects in Falmouth where he was a key part of sustainable design with the goal of authentic care for the environment. In 2021, Miles became an integral part of the Mashpee Wampanoag First Light housing project as the Clerk of Works. This project has housed over 100 tribal members and elders in need of affordable housing.

As a well-respected tribal member and NLC Board Director, one can always find Miles on the land and in the water with his children and others practicing indigenous lifeways that the Wampanoag people have practiced for millennia. He brings dedication, experience and commitment to each and every one of his projects, and for this, we celebrate Miles in our 9th edition, 2023 Winter e-newsletter.