

Wabanaki Youth in Science SEASONAL REVIEW

Welcome, Esther Sappier!

Kkwey kkwey! As of July, we were honored to welcome Esther Sappier as the new WaYS Program Administrator. Esther is Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Diné. Her maternal clan is Bitterwater and her paternal clan is Eagle. Her maternal grandfather is from the BlackStreaked Wood clan, and her paternal grandfather is from the Bear clan. She resides with her family on Indian Island, the homeland that raised her and first taught her how to love the earth.

With over eight years of experience working in Wabanaki communities, Esther brings a strong foundation of service and deep relational knowledge. Trusted, caring, and dedicated, she is known for the steady presence. When she's not working, Esther loves spending time with her family - especially up to camp or out on the river. As Program Administrator, Esther will play a vital role in keeping WaYS running smoothly. Her approach is deeply grounded in cultural knowledge and community values, and she leads with respect and humility. We are thrilled Esther has joined the WaYS team. Please join us in giving her a warm welcome.

With gratitude and good medicine,

Jennifer Galipeau, eel clan

Panawahpskek Nation citizen



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WABANAKI
YOUTH IN SCIENCE

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

GARDENS AT SIPAYIK

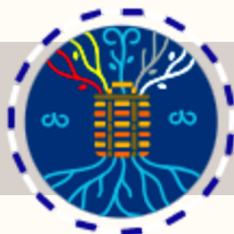


This summer, Siqon, Maya, Taliah, and Teresa served as WaYS Garden Interns, joined by Laylonni, an intern with the Passamaquoddy Tribe, to support food sovereignty efforts at Sipayik. Guided by the fierce and knowledgeable leadership of Plansowes Dana, they worked with mentors, family members, and community members to grow healthy and nutritious food for the community.

Their daily efforts included laying down cardboard as a weed blocker, planting and weeding, hauling soil, and processing the food they helped harvest. They also spent long hours watering during the severe drought and helped put up fencing around the garden beds to protect the crops. When harvests came in, the interns worked together to deliver fresh food to the local food pantry for distribution, ensuring that community members directly benefited from their work.

Beyond the physical labor, the garden became a classroom of living knowledge. The interns reflected on how powerful it was to learn directly from Plansowes, whose teachings shaped not only their gardening practices but also their understanding of community care and responsibility. Together, they also participated in ceremonies that deepened their connection to place and culture.

For these young women, the experience reinforced that gardening is never just about planting seeds. It is about nourishing relationships with the land, with valued mentors, family, and with each other. Woliwoni to the Sipayik Garden interns and mentors for the way you show up for your community!



RESTORING FOREST KNOWLEDGE: HONORING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LAND

This summer, WaYS launched the **Restoring Tribal Relations and Forest Knowledge Project**, brought together Wabanaki and Haudenosaunee students, knowledge sharers, and forestry professionals for a 10-week journey of learning. Supported by the U.S. Forest Service through the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the project centered Indigenous ecological knowledge while connecting with western science practices to address the current forestry challenges we face today.



Participants traveled across territories, beginning a culture and knowledge exchange at Akwesasne. Followed by a host gathering in Wabanakik at Nibezun. Along the way, we studied culturally significant trees while engaging in land and water-based practices such as canoeing ancestral waterways, ash log pounding, and medicine walks.

We are especially proud to recognize WaYS interns - Frank Miliano IV, Sierra Lank, Apemesim Galipeau, and Taliah Doughty for their successful completion of their projects. We are so proud of you!

Kci-Woliwoni / Nia:wen / Great Thanks

This project would not have been possible without the guidance, generosity, and knowledge of so many community members, cultural knowledge sharers, and natural resource professionals. With deep gratitude to:

Alicia Cook, Angello Johnson, Ben Stevens, Brianna Smith, Candy Thomas, Carol Dana, Charlene Huerth, Chelsea Chavaree, Damon Galipeau, Darrell Newell, Dave Arquette, Dean George, Dolly Apt, Dwayne Tomah, Edith McDonald, Esther Sappier, Gabe Paul, Hazel Powless, Henry Dedrick, Issac Syliboy, James Francis, Jazz Thompson-Tintor, Jennifer Galipeau, Jessica Raspitha, Jim Pardilla, John Daigle, John Neptune, Jus Crea, Karonioton / Paul Thomas, Les Benedict, Nick Bear, Nolan Altvater, Norman Peters, Orion Tintor, Paula Love, Plansowes Dana, Riccardo Najar, Richard Silliboy, Roiane Orenrekowa, Roger Paul, Ryan Ranco, Sakokwenionkwass (Tom Porter), Seneca Love, Stanley Neptune, Steven Phillips, Tekatsitonkie Cook, Tim Baxter, Tony David, Tyler Curleyhead, Tyler Everett, and Zackary Neptune.



INTERNSHIPS

A FAMILIAL PURSUIT TO RESTORE OUR WATERWAYS



Quinton, now entering his sophomore year of high school, reflected on the many ways that his internship opened his eyes to the environmental crises at hand. He referenced samples of startlingly poor quality that he retrieved, along with his father and brother near a local mill, and what this could mean for the future of the environment. "I think we need to try and save our environment," Quinton remarked, "because if it goes away, we won't be able to get it back."

Over the summer, WaYS partnered with the Sipayik Environmental Department to welcome a group of youth interns, including brothers Tristan and Quinton Doughty. Both Tristan and Quinton share a passion for protecting local streams and rivers, and this opportunity allowed them to further their stewardship of these sacred waterways in and around their homelands at Sipayik through solution-oriented research. Billy Longfellow, Tribal Water Quality Manager, served as a mentor to the brothers, teaching them fundamental skills like field sampling methods and in-lab analysis.

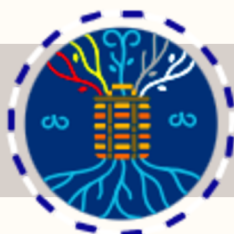


Want to help us support our youth through culturally grounded, career-oriented, hands-on experiences?



**Donate here or visit
wabanakiyouthinscience.org**

Tristan, a recent graduate of Shead High School, found that his interest in pursuing a career in environmental science was only strengthened through his time at WaYS, and this opportunity prompted him to truly discover how much he enjoys work that directly benefits both people and the environment.



AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMING

This summer, the Penobscot Nation Canoe Team trained with dedication and brought home an astounding 60 medals from the 2025 United States Canoe Association (USCA) National Canoe and Kayak Championships victories reflect more than athletic ability, they embody a living practice of Wabanaki Traditional Ecological Knowledge. For thousands of years, our people have paddled these waters, carrying values of respect, gratitude, and resilience. Canoeing today continues that lineage, strengthening cultural identity and community connection.



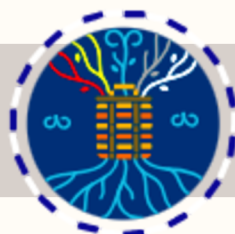
CARRYING ON A COMMUNITY TRADITION

The team is fortunate to be guided by the dedication of longtime coach, John Neptune, whose leadership and knowledge have shaped generations of paddlers. Apemesim Galipeau balanced his WaYS Forest Knowledge Internship with coaching responsibilities, showing what it means to show up for community and uplift younger paddlers. When Apemesim traveled to participate in cultural exchanges, Nora Duffy stepped in to lead paddle sessions and train with the youth. Additional mentorship came from Mark Ranco, Rod McLain, Chip Loring, and others who generously gave their time and teachings to the young paddlers.



Through WaYS' TEK programming, staff member Damon Galipeau supported the team by grounding their training in cultural teachings. Canoeing was not only about competition, but about gratitude for the water, honoring ancestors, and embracing the growth that comes from challenge.

The Penobscot Nation Canoe Team reminds us that when cultural knowledge, mentorship, and opportunity come together, the youth thrive.



ANCESTRAL LANDS TRAIL CREW

TALES FROM THE TRAILS



The crew returned to Gulf Hagas for some seasonal upkeep, including building a new set of rock steps.



They spent some time on Wolastoqiyik lands (in Littleton) restoring trails and constructing a set of stairs.



The crew ventured to the south side of the Katahdin Woods & Waters Nat'l Monument at the start of September.



In partnership with the Downeast Coastal Conservancy, a bog walk was built in addition to other new trails.



WAYS TO CONTACT

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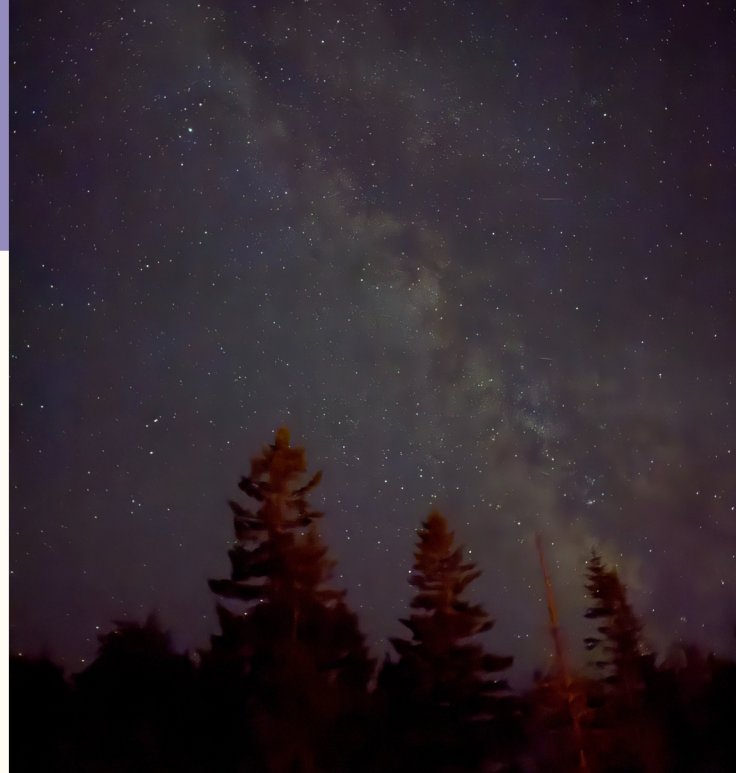
Jayden Dana

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THE BUTTERFLY PROJECT

Wabanaki Youth in Science met with staff from the National Park Service at Acadia National Park to explore ways to bring Indigenous voices, knowledge and practices into park spaces. The time together and time spent in the park focused on how to indigenize and decolonize National Park Service programming and interpretation so that visitors can better understand the deep history, culture and ongoing stewardship of the Wabanaki people.

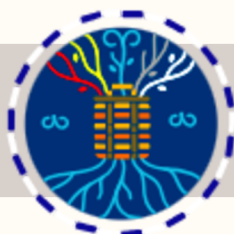


The meeting created space for meaningful dialogue about how the parks can honor the ancestral and contemporary connections the Wabanaki have to this land. Ideas included weaving traditional ecological knowledge into educational programming, creating opportunities for Wabanaki youth to lead and share their perspectives, and expanding recognition of Indigenous presence across the park, interpretation and visitor experiences by coming together. Wabanaki Youth and Science and Acadia staff are taking steps towards a future where national parks are not only places of natural beauty but also places that uplift Indigenous voices and stories the collaboration reflects on. A shared commitment to ensuring that parks are welcoming inclusive spaces where visitors can learn about the land's full history and its first caretakers.



Wabanaki Youth in Science would like to thank Heather Augustine, Minquansis Sapiel, and John Dennis for facilitating and sharing knowledge on behalf of WaYS. We would also like to thank the National Park Service staff and invited guests for being present and sharing knowledge. Special thank you to Rebecca Cole-Will, Acting Deputy Superintendent and Joy Absher, Program Manager for Interpretation and Education for Acadia National Park.

We look forward to the continued partnership between WaYS and the National Park Service!



wskitkamikw EARTH CAMPS



WaYS is always looking to expand our list of location options for earth camps!

Please fill out this survey if you know of any welcoming spaces to host us:

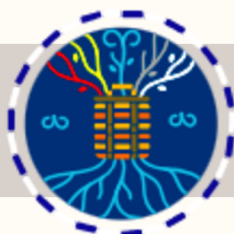
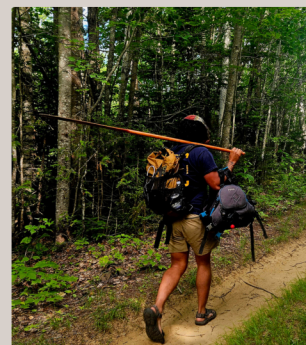


Since the summer of 2013, WaYS has hosted regular wskitkamikw earth camps. We hold these camps in a variety of locations throughout Wabanaki homelands, and the primary focus of each camp is to connect our youth with experts in both traditional ecological knowledge and western science in an immersive, outdoor setting. These camps allow youth an opportunity to understand components of their own cultural heritage firsthand, acknowledge various current and pressing environmental changes, and learn ways forward to manage the lands to incorporate a broader and more holistic understanding of their own roles as stewards of the land.

Fall wskitkamikw Mini Camp at Nibezun

Join us for a fall mini camp at Nibezun! Food and lodging will be provided for 20 youth campers, October 17-19. Seasonal camp activities will include hide processing, mushroom inoculation, tree identification, and more! For more information, contact esther@wabanakiyouthinscience.org

Register your camper(s) for our fall mini camp here:





WaYS TO SUPPORT

Your generosity helps support the next generation of Wabanaki leaders, scientists, and knowledge sharers. Every contribution helps remove barriers and deepen youth connections to land, culture, and community.



Supplies for afterschool programs: notebooks, field guides, art supplies, and science kits.

One youth's participation in a land-based learning activity like archery, canoeing, or plant walks.

Fuel or transportation costs to bring youth to a local gathering or site.

Honorarium for a Wabanaki knowledge sharer or language speaker to spend ½ day mentoring youth.

Provides nourishing meals for camp or community gatherings for 25 people.

Seeding our gear library outfitting youth with boots, rain jackets, backpacks, and sleeping bags.

Funds a stipend for a WaYS intern in a seasonal land and leadership program.

Covers staffing, meals, and materials for a week-long land-based learning camp.

Fully funds a paid summer internship for one Wabanaki youth, supporting their growth as a future environmental and cultural leader.

DONATE HERE



Wabanaki Youth in Science empowers Indigenous youth by connecting them to culture, science, and the land through hands-on, land-based learning rooted in Indigenous knowledge.

WaYS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.
EIN: 47-5239057

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