

POSITION DESCRIPTION



Intern Position for Wabanaki College Student

Sustaining Wabanaki Basketmaking - Community-Led Project

Wabanaki Youth in Science (WaYS) is seeking a Wabanaki college student intern (age 18+) to support a community-led project focused on access, processing, and storage to sustain Wabanaki basketmaking traditions for future generations.

This internship centers brown and black ash stewardship, cultural knowledge, data governance, and community decision-making. Interns will work alongside basketmakers, harvesters, Elders, Cultural Knowledge Sharers, and community partners to strengthen access to materials, support processing, and co-develop systems for long-term, community-based storage of brown/black ash and related data. The internship will be mentored by Passamaquoddy artist and cultural knowledge sharer Gabriel Frey, along with John Daigle and Ella McDonald of the Ash Protection Collaboration Across Waponahkik (APCAW) Lab at the University of Maine.

Internship Details

- Compensation: \$20 per hour (\$6000 total)
- Time Commitment: 300 hrs. per year – flexible, based on school schedule and community activities
- Duration: 1 year with an opportunity to extend internship to 2027 and 2028
- Location: Hybrid - based at the University of Maine (Nutting Hall), with work in Wabanaki communities and virtual meetings as needed
- Travel to Akwesasne and Quebec expected – all related travel expenses covered

Internship Focus Areas

Access: Learn from knowledgeable basketmakers to assess basket-quality ash trees. Support the co-design of a communication platform where landowners and Wabanaki harvesters can share invitations to harvest and site information.

Processing: Learn the methods of processing ash splints. Assist with community conversations around tools, technologies, and governance preferences for processing brown ash.

Storage: Help co-develop a plan for long-term storage and community-based distribution of ash splints to Wabanaki communities.

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What You'll Do

- Support the organization of visits and workshops related to community preferences around storing and processing brown ash.
- Support Tribal community ash seed collection and growing efforts for long-term species preservation
- Assist with community outreach, scheduling, and coordination
- Learn from basketmakers, harvesters, Elders, and cultural knowledge sharers
- Help uplift Indigenous Knowledge, cultural protocols, and community governance
- Support community-defined data stewardship and governance practices
- Participate in reflection, storytelling, and documentation activities

Methods & Approach

This project is grounded in **Decolonizing and Participatory Action Research (PAR)** methods. Interns will support research and learning processes that are community-led, relational, and accountable to Wabanaki values, priorities, and governance systems. Knowledge shared through this project will be guided by cultural protocols, reciprocity, and community consent.

Ethics, Consent & Data Sovereignty

This project follows Indigenous research ethics and community-based consent practices. Interns will be informed in:

- Respectful engagement with Elders, basketmakers, and knowledge holders
- Informed consent and voluntary participation
- Cultural protocols around knowledge sharing
- Community ownership, control, access, and possession of data and stories
- Tribal and community data governance principles
- Any required Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Tribal research review processes, where applicable

Who Should Apply

- Wabanaki college students (undergraduate or graduate)
- Students interested in basketmaking, forestry, environmental studies, cultural revitalization, Indigenous studies, or community-based research
- Those who enjoy working with community and learning from Elders and knowledge sharers
- Students who value relational, land-based, and culturally grounded learning
- Holder of a valid driver's license and reliable transportation

Apply before March 1, 2026

<https://forms.office.com/r/RVdfrN2QD8>

