

# First Light Conservation Community Delegation

May 5, 2020

At the June 6, 2019 First Light Katahdin Gathering, Wabanaki participants met separately to discuss their requests to the conservation community. Afterwards, they met in council with the conservation community and asked that the land trusts do two important things as the First Light continues: 1) inform their boards of the importance of this work and meet the Wabanaki community with stronger commitments to the goals of First Light and, 2) to act in a coordinated manner that focuses energy and relieves burden to the Wabanaki community.

Fundamentally, this Delegation is being created to collaborate with and respond to the Wabanaki Task Force at the speed of trust. In collaboration with the Wabanaki Task Force, the Delegation hopes to help the Task Force move towards some answers to define what increased Wabanaki access to land means and entails, learn and consider together the instruments for that, as well as to consider how to effectively build capacity among Wabanaki, and then assist in the solutions chosen.

This is an internal document to guide our coming together, and to explain our purpose to the Wabanaki Task Force. The Delegation's mission is to build Wabanaki capacity, agency and coordination while strengthening our own conservation movement by better incorporating indigenous needs, knowledge and perspectives. Any human and/or financial resources required for participation by individual members in the Conservation Community Delegation would be the responsibility of the member organizations.

The goals of a Conservation Community Delegation within First Light are:

1. To be helpful to the Task Force in defining what increased Wabanaki access to land might mean, including bringing in outside resources and ideas to learn about different tools and opportunities.
2. To be helpful to the Task Force as they consider how to increase capacity among Wabanaki on considerations of land and water access.
3. To spread the lessons of First Light deeper into the conservation community to continue efforts to increase opportunities to expand Wabanaki access to land.
4. To model for the conservation community meaningful engagement with Wabanaki communities in a respectful manner that is grounded in an understanding of history and builds Wabanaki capacity.
5. To focus and coordinate the efforts of conservation groups who will be working on expanding Wabanaki access and connection to land. If we can surrender our desire to act independently, we will have a greater group benefit and reduce burdens on our Wabanaki colleagues.
6. To coordinate and consolidate communication, projects, requests and actions of the conservation community in Wabanaki country, and with the Wabanaki Task Force, to minimize the burden of response on the Wabanaki community.
7. To focus fundraising efforts and to reduce competition among conservation and indigenous groups to advance our shared goals of expanding Wabanaki access to land.
8. To collaboratively identify and pursue financial resources to build Wabanaki capacity.
9. To be strong advocates within the conservation community for the requests that are made of us from the Wabanaki Task Force to build Wabanaki agency and capacity.