

Wabanaki Youth in Science SEASONAL REVIEW

AUTUMN 2026



Honoring the Past, Honoring the Future

Over the past few months, WaYS has been welcomed into spaces that have left a profound mark on us. We have listened to elders share their stories, wisdom, and hopes for the generations yet to come. We have also watched young people learn on the land, ask questions, strengthen their connection to culture, and begin carrying knowledge forward in their own ways.

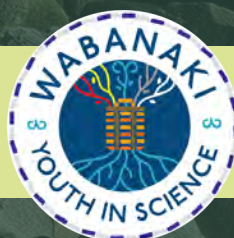
When a young person learns about ash, gathers medicines, speaks their language, paddles ancestral waters, connects to the land, or sits beside a Knowledge Sharer and listens, they are part of something much larger than a program. They are part of a living continuum connecting past, present, and future.

As you read this edition and see the many places WaYS youth, staff, Knowledge Sharers, and partners have traveled and gathered, we hope you see that connection woven throughout these pages.

Our future is strongest when it is grounded in the wisdom and teachings of those who came before us. This edition is dedicated to the elders who attended the TRIBE, Inc. School in 1970 and 1971. A special offer of gratitude to Heather Augustine for helping preserve and share the stories of our people so they continue to be remembered and carried forward. We honor those who came before us, invest in those who will come after us, and together, continue the work.

EDITION INCLUDES:

- Sustaining Ash & Basket Making
- Leading a Summer of Learning
- Restoring Tribal Relations and Forest Knowledge project
- Documenting the Shoreline
- Caring for Wabanaki Homelands
- Water WaYS
- WaYS Camps
- Six Months of Impact





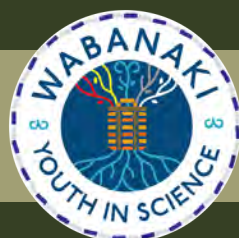
The Brown Ash Tree : Culture, Community, and Continuity

Over the past several months, WaYS staff and interns Sierra Lank and Julien Morris of Motahkomikuk have collaborated with the Ash Protection Collaboration Across Waponahkik (APCAW) at the University of Maine to identify Brown Ash trees for harvesting, seed collection, and data gathering.

With permission from private property owners, WaYS interns, staff, and APCAW assessed ash stands, monitored for Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), collected data, and harvested trees. The harvested ash was promptly pounded in community, with splints shared among basketmakers and reserved for teaching WaYS interns. The team also identified seed-bearing trees for fall collection, storage, and distribution.

Looking ahead, APCAW and WaYS will continue monitoring and harvesting ash while expanding opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing. We are planning trips to Wabanaki communities in Canada to learn new ash pounding technologies. At the heart of this work is a shared goal: increasing access to Brown Ash for Tribal communities while strengthening awareness of EAB, improving monitoring and response efforts, and deepening community connections to our cultures and traditions.

We offer our gratitude to Gabriel Frey, Ella McDonald, Damon and Bem Galipeau for supporting our WaYS interns on this meaningful journey.



2026 Restoring Tribal Relations and Forest Knowledge: WaYS Leads a Summer of Learning

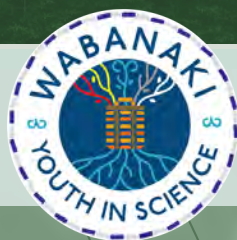
Four Wabanaki high school students were selected for our second year cohort of Restoring Tribal Relations and Forest Knowledge, a 10-week WaYS, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force collaboration centered on ways to address current environmental issues, land-based learning, mentorship, and intertribal exchanges.

Through capstone projects, the interns explored environmental issues and our Wabanaki Knowledge Systems:

- **Anahla MacGregor:** sweetgrass restoration
- **Aleena Dana:** Wabanaki language and intergenerational knowledge
- **Chaske LeBron:** Brown Ash, Emerald Ash Borer, and basketmaking traditions
- **Asia Stevens:** responsibilities to water and healthy ecosystems

Together, their work highlighted the connections among waters, plants, forests, language, cultural practices, and storytelling.

Interns traveled to Akwesasne in June to learn with Saint Regis Mohawk's Environmental Division and Haudenosaunee partners. In July, WaYS welcomed our Haudenosaunee relatives to Wabanaki homelands for wskitkamikw Earth Camp at Medawisla Lodge, an AMC property. Through language, traditional practices, forest and water science, food sovereignty, canoeing, art, and storytelling, participants-built foundational knowledge and built upon shared values.



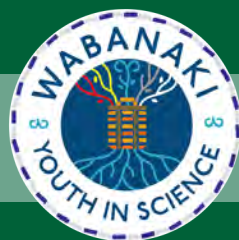
Honoring Knowledge, Relationships, and Community

We express our immense gratitude to the Knowledge Sharers, mentors, partners, and staff who supported the Restoring Tribal Relations and Forest Knowledge Project: Jessica Raspitha, Angello Johnson, Dave Arquette, Eric Thompson, Raymond Rourke Jr., Tyler Curleyhead, Riccardo Najar, Emma Phillips, Ahtwki Skidders, Mary Arquette, Bailee Rourke, Tonatiuh “Gutch” Salinas, McKay Burley, Tyler Jacobs, Justin Cree, Sateiokwen Bucktooth, Cyril Francis, John Neptune, Patty Phillips, Bonnie Newsom, Saugum Dana, Minguansis Sapiel, Shantel DeMerchant, Tyler Everett, Ella McDonald, Steven Phillips, Chris Sockalexis, James Francis, Gabe Paul, Kelly Demmons, Chip Loring, Sage Phillips, Amber Ballenger, Hazel Powless, Neil Patterson, Sheylee Sapiel, Genevieve Trafelet, Kristin Peet, Damon Galipeau, Apemesim “Bem” Galipeau, Jayden Dana, Logan Dana, Liliana San Pedro, and Jennifer Galipeau.

We are equally grateful to the many community members who welcomed our youth, shared knowledge, and helped create meaningful learning experiences throughout the summer. A special thank you to Butch Phillips’ family for joining us at camp to honor their father, grandfather, and ancestor and for sharing in the celebration of his life, knowledge, leadership, and legacy.

We also thank the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force, and Indigenous Forest Knowledge Fund for their partnership and for making these intertribal exchanges possible.

Woliwoni and nia:wen for sharing your time, teachings, experiences, and relationships with the next generation. The relationships strengthened and knowledge shared through this project will carry well beyond this summer.





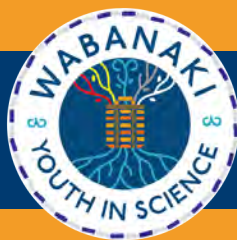
Documenting the Shoreline: A Day of Field Research and Cultural Preservation

In April, WaYS students joined Bonnie Newsom, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Anthropology and Faculty Associate at the Climate Change Institute at the University of Maine, and Donald Soctomah, Passamaquoddy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and longtime WaYS' Board member, along with several undergraduate and Ph.D. students for a day of hands-on field research.

As the shoreline continues to change, so does the urgency to document, protect, and learn from what remains. We visit to strengthen connections to our ancestors, knowledge systems, and responsibilities to tell their stories.

Using specialized tools and techniques, the group measured shoreline loss and assessed the impacts of erosion on culturally significant sites including shell middens, clay deposits, artifacts, and petroglyphs that carry thousands of years of history.

Woliwoni for Julian, Sierra, Asia, Ella, Kamila, Shannon and Aleena for spending your Saturday contributing to this important work and inviting WaYS students to be part of this experience. Opportunities like this spark curiosity, deepen connection to place, and inspire the next generation to carry forward this important work. We honor and value the teachings Bonnie and Donald both offered our group.



Walking Together: Trail Crew on Wabanaki Homelands

The WaYS Ancestral Lands Trail Crew continues a busy 2026 field season, building skills and experience that prepare Wabanaki youth for careers in conservation, forestry, and natural resource stewardship while caring for lands throughout Wabanaki homelands.

Led by Crew Leaders Wambli Martinez and Jayden Dana, with crew members Logan Dana, Ashton Paul, Landon Duffy, Bradley Cummings, and Seneca Chase Stevens, the team has worked alongside the National Park Service, tribal and community partners, land trusts, and conservation organizations throughout Wabanaki homelands.

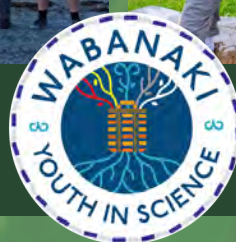
Projects have included trail construction and maintenance, bog walks and bridges, brushing, hazard-tree removal, drainage improvements, trail reroutes, ash monitoring and seed collection, stream surveys, and restoration work. At Acadia National Park, the crew constructed and replaced sections of bog walk, maintained trails, monitored ash trees, and supported restoration work on Cadillac Mountain.

At Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, crew members brushed trails and roadsides, removed hazards, and participated in Stream Smart training. With Penobscot Nation, they rebuilt trail bridges and completed Certified Logging Professional and ash seed collection training.

Professional development remains central to the program. Crew members have participated in Trail Skills College, rigging, rockwork, trail design, Stream Smart, Certified Logging Professional, chainsaw, ash seed collection, and other technical field training, strengthening skills and exposure to careers in forestry, parks, conservation, and natural resources.

And the work continues. Through mid-November, the crew will take on additional projects and training opportunities. Each experience is an investment in Wabanaki youth by creating meaningful employment, strengthening connections to homelands, and preparing them as the next generation of caretakers.

Woliwoni to our crew, partners, Knowledge Sharers, and supporters who make this work possible.

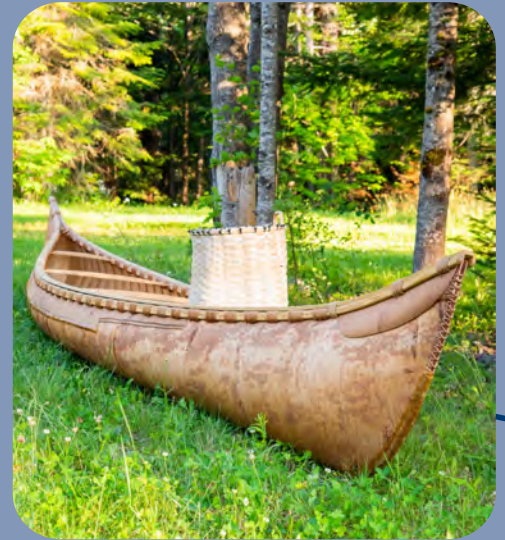


Wabanaki Youth on the Water WaYS

This summer, WaYS supported a series of canoeing opportunities for youth across the Dawnland in partnership with Tribal departments, schools, and community organizations. Together, Water WaYS helped young people build confidence on the water while connecting canoe travel with Wabanaki culture, environmental stewardship, and water science.

- The Penobscot Nation Canoe Team trained throughout the summer at the Boys & Girls Club to prepare for Flatwater Nationals, ultimately winning gold on the Susquehanna River by showing the strength of consistent training, teamwork, and community support.
- Water WaYS also collaborated with the Boys & Girls Club and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians at the youth intertribal gathering in Maliseet territory at Wilderness Pines. Many youth participated and canoed for the first time as they learned how to get onto the water in a safe and supportive setting.
- Creating a meaningful close to their summer internship projects, tribal youth from the Sipayik Environmental Department experienced a day canoeing on the water to scout a nearby stream for future trips after discussing culture, restoration, and land-based learning with WaYS staff and knowledge sharers. Thank you to Zachary Cling for inviting WaYS to join this fun outing!
- Orono High School ninth grades spent several days on the Penobscot River with WaYS staff and the Penobscot Nation Water Quality Department to learn how Wabanaki canoe culture and water science are deeply connected.

We plan to bring more youth out on the Water WaYS again very soon!



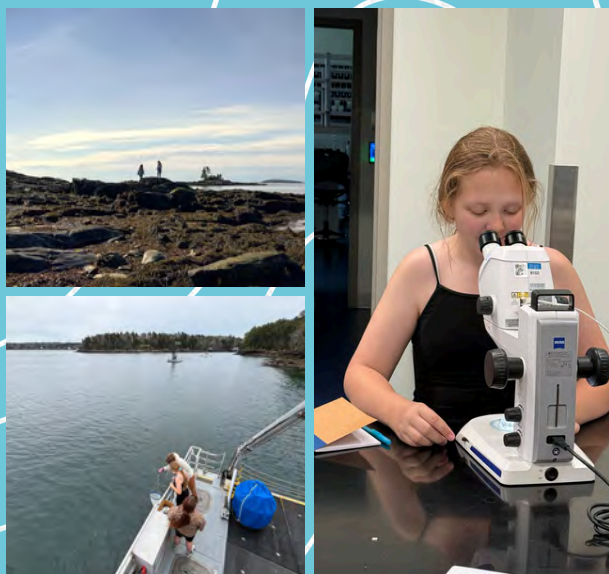
Winter wskitkamikw (Earth) Camp Millinocket (March 20 - 22, 2026)

WaYS welcomed Wabanaki youth to our annual Winter wskitkamikw Camp for a weekend of winter ecology, cultural teachings, and outdoor learning. Youth explored tracking, tree identification, shelter and fire building, beading, medicinal plants, storytelling, and more. Woliwoni to Minguansis, Steven, Lauren, Alexandra, Ben Simpson, and Ben Stevens for sharing their knowledge with our youth!



Spring wskitkamikw (Earth) Camp Bigelow Lab for Ocean Sciences (May 8 - 10, 2026)

Our Spring wskitkamikw Earth Camp at Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences brought youth together for hands-on ocean science, cultural knowledge, and coastal learning. Woliwoni to Evan, Aislyn, Minguansis, Steven, and Maya for sharing their knowledge and making the weekend so meaningful!



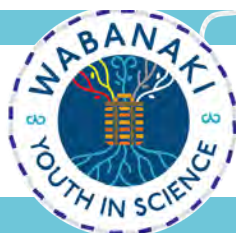
Fall wskitamikw (Earth) Camp October 16 - 18, 2026 at Nibezun

Join us for Fall wskitkamikw Earth Camp at Nibezun!

Participants will take part in a variety of cultural, land-based, and science activities, including Water Science with USGS • Ash Knowledge with APCAW • Canoeing • Birch Bark Art • Beading • Archery • Fishing • much more!



Scan here to sign up!



SIX MONTHS OF IMPACT

The past six months have been an incredible season of growth, learning, and connection for Wabanaki Youth in Science. Our youth, interns, staff, and Knowledge Sharers have traveled throughout Wabanaki homelands and beyond. Together, we gained skills, strengthened relationships, and created opportunities for Wabanaki youth.

21 Summer Internships • 340 Youth Engaged • 16 Trail Projects • 12 Basket-Quality Ash Trees Harvested & Processed • 7 Staff Development Trainings • 10 Ash Site Visits • 7 Attended Conferences & Community Gatherings • 3 Invited Presentations • 2 wskitkamikw Earth camps hosted • 2 Intertribal Cultural Exchanges • 12 Canoe Outings!

WaYS' programming connected youth with forestry, ash, sweetgrass, water, language, basketmaking, food sovereignty, media, and cultural stewardship. Our Ancestral Lands Trail Crew completed projects throughout Wabanaki homelands, while our ash work supported basket makers through harvesting and processing basket-quality trees.

To increase long-term capacity, staff participated in First Aid, Certified Logging Professional, Stream Smart, technical field skills, ash seed collection, Trail Skills College, and Leave No Trace trainings. We launched a drone program, invested in equipment, flight training, and FAA pilot licensing, and purchased a 12-passenger van for safer transportation throughout Wabanaki homelands. WaYS continued building awareness and relationships through invited presentations and community events.

As we move into fall, our work continues with wskitkamikw Earth Camp, ash seed collection, forestry and trail projects, youth programming, and community events.

Behind every number above is a young person gaining experience, a Knowledge Sharer carrying knowledge forward, and a relationship growing stronger. Your investment makes these opportunities possible.

As we grow, the need for sustainable support for student wages, Knowledge Sharer honoraria, transportation, equipment, camps, training, and year-round programming grows with us. We invite you to invest in the next season of this work and help ensure Wabanaki youth continue to have opportunities to learn, lead, work, and care for their homelands.

Woliwoni for investing in Wabanaki youth and walking alongside WaYS.

Jennifer Galipeau, Executive Director

