

This Land Acknowledgement was written by and provided to the organizers of the Climate and Community Resilience: Lessons from the Soil series by John and Donna Moody of the Winter Center for Indigenous Traditions.

Winter Center for Indigenous Traditions, P.O. Box 328, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755
802-649-8870 wcit@wintercenter-indigenous.org

When Indigenous peoples in the Americas travel to other Indigenous Nation homelands, it is a common courtesy since ancient times to acknowledge the Indigenous Nation and Peoples whose homeland we are gathering on.

For the purposes of this **series**, being broadcast and watched from the **Wôbitek** [White River] on the ancient grounds of the **Wobitek Odanak** [White River Village] in **N'dakinna** [Our Land], we are gathering in the middle of this ancient Nation homeland which includes Vermont, New Hampshire, northern Massachusetts, western Maine, and southern Quebec. The **Alnôbak** [the People] as they are called in **Alnôbaiwi** [the Abenaki language] have also been called the **Wôbanakiak** [People of the East/Dawnland] or **Abenaki** since ancient times by Indigenous relatives in the east and Indigenous peoples as far away as **Hopi** and **Diné** [Navajo] Country all the way to present day Alaska and Tierra del Fuego in South America.

Today we are convening online from the sovereign homeland of the Abenaki Nation and People. Abenaki traditions speak clearly of being created here in the beginning. Though archaeologists and linguists as recently as the last forty years stated that the Abenaki and all of their Algonquin language group relations from California and High Plateau to the Plains, Great Lakes, Hudson Bay, to the Maritimes, and down to Virginia are no more than **1,500 years old**, and some more recently have stated that the Abenaki may be related to Indigenous Peoples who are documented here for **9,000 years** (a date that keeps moving back given the major Abenaki site recently documented in Keene, NH which is dated to the **mid-13,000 BP** (Before Present) time period), the Abenaki peoples themselves, along with many of their cousins in the Northeast, state unequivocally that '**We have always been here, and we will always be here.**'

- From ancient times down to **1760** the Abenaki Nation, which included numerous villages and thousands of extended families, was an independent Native Nation centered in their homeland recognized by all other Native Nations and the British, French, Dutch and other European colonizers. Though some parts of the homeland in the Seacoast of New Hampshire and Maine, southern Vermont and New Hampshire as well as northern Massachusetts, were shared with the encroaching English colonists from the 1630's on, most of the original homeland has never been sold or given away.

In the American Revolution, George Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette, Jacob Bailey, Timothy Bedell, Moses Hazen and many other leaders of the American resistance agreed with the Abenaki and their cousins the **Penobscot** and **Passamaquoddy** of Maine, that they would retain their villages and homeland in exchange for helping in the defense of the northern frontier against the British. The ancient villages of **Missisquoi** in Northwestern Vermont and **Koasek/Coos** in the Upper Connecticut River were both explicitly acknowledged as Abenaki villages of longstanding which would remain in Abenaki hands in perpetuity. The **Penobscot** and **Passamaquoddy Nations** retained three villages in Maine after the Revolution after a tremendous, thirty year struggle down to 1800. In Abenaki country, the word of the new American colonials was not kept.

So the Abenaki Nation was largely driven underground in the **1760 to 1800** period. The People have remained in every town and watershed in the homeland right down to the present day. In the **1970's**, the **Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi** and the **Koasek Abenaki of the Koasek Traditional Band of the Sovereign Abenaki Nation** stood up in northwestern Vermont and the Upper Connecticut River Valley. They formed the **Abenaki Nation coalition** with many Abenaki extended families and communities to protect and care for the People and the homeland as well as to facilitate the protection of Abenaki burial grounds and sacred sites, and to return Abenaki burials, grave goods, and sacred items back home for reburial.

In **2008**, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Federal Acknowledgement Project rejected the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi petition for federal recognition with extensive involvement of the Vermont Attorney General's office. In 2011 and 2012, the Vermont Legislature acknowledged four Abenaki communities including, the **Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi**, the **Elnu Tribe**, the **Nulhegan Tribe**, and the **Koasek Band of the Koas**

The original **Koasek Traditional Band of the Sovereign Abenaki Nation**, which is still based in Thetford, Vermont, was blocked from being acknowledged by the Vermont Legislature in 2016 and three of the four new tribes. Chief Nathan Pero of this group will be our speaker at Event # 2. In addition the **Abenaki Nation of New Hampshire** and the **Cowasuck Band of Pennacook/Abenaki People** are long term Abenaki groups which are also not state or federally recognized. There are hundreds of Abenaki extended families in this area and the wider nation homeland and beyond which are still here. In Canada, there are two Abenaki Nation communities at **Odanak** and **Wolinak** which are both federally recognized in Canada as First Nations.

We want to acknowledge the ancient Abenaki Nation and People. We are aware that countless newcomer families in this area and the wider region were given Indigenous Seeds and Plants, shown the ways of Sogalikan (Maple Sugaring), introduced to many, crucial technologies and ways of living from Canoe, Toboggan, Snowshoe, and Basket Making to ways of farming, fishing, trapping, and living along with caring for the land, waters, and air in a good way which are still widely practiced in the Abenaki homeland. We hope we will learn to better care for the land and waters here in partnership with the many Abenaki Nation peoples in a respectful way.