

Wearing Our Heritage: A Case Study in Decolonization



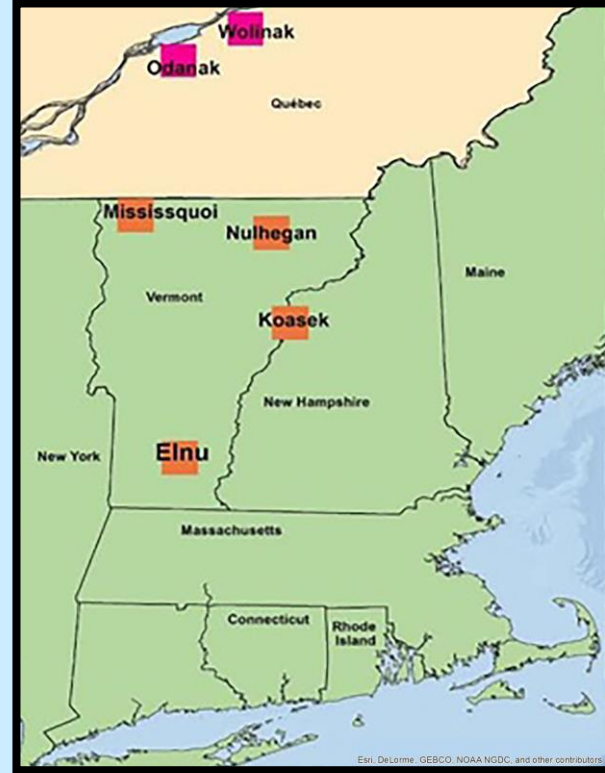
Vera Sheehan, Executive Director
Vermont Abenaki Artists Association; and Abenaki Arts & Education Center



N'Dakinna (Our Hometown)



Aerial View of N'dakinna
By Amy Hook Therrein
Vermont Abenaki Artists Association.



GIS Map of N'dakinna
By Lina Longtoe Schulmeisters
Vermont Abenaki Artists Association.

Tribal Recognition



2011

Elnu and Nulhegan Tribes are recognized.



2012

Koasek and Missisquoi Tribes are recognized.

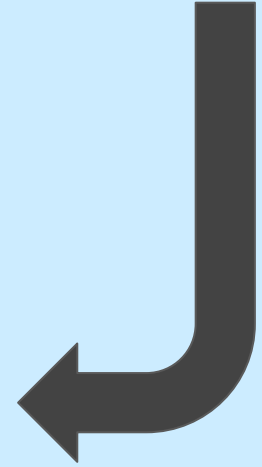
2013 Vermont Abenaki Artists Association is established

Recognition day photo credits: (left) WCAJ and (right) Vera Longtoe Sheehan



Inspiration

Changing the Focus



Initial Goals

Abenaki Community

- Increase the visibility of the Abenaki community
- Educate the public about Abenaki history and culture
- To be included in the process of interpreting out history and culture.

Museum

- To ensure that the Museum's programming and exhibitions would reflect the enduring presence of Lake Champlain's first navigators

Including Community Members



Aaron York (Master Canoe Maker)
Exhibit Installation Member



Breanna S.
Intern



Vera Longtoe Sheehan
Co-curator

Our Goals Aligned

- To ensure that the Museum's programming and exhibitions would reflect the enduring presence of the Abenaki people
- To ensure there is an Abenaki voice in museum exhibitions.
- To develop exhibits, public programs, and education resources.
- Increase the visibility of the Abenaki community.
- Educate the public about Abenaki history and culture.

Equitable Process

- Traditional versus contemporary
- Community versus institutional voice
- All ages and genders represented



Jan Medor with contemporary regalia she created. Image courtesy of Diane Stevens.



Circle of Courage Dancers.



Wedding portrait of Jeanne Morningstar and Bob Kent. Courtesy of artist.

Untold Stories



Francine Poitras Jones and her mother.
Image courtesy of Francine Poitras Jones.



Liz Charlebois and Oz.
Image courtesy of Diane Stevens.

Spiritual



Image courtesy of Vermont Abenaki Artists Association.

Cultural Affirmation



Painted Leather and Jean Jacket. 1990s



Beaded Jean Jacket.

Image Courtesy of Vermont Abenaki Artists Association

Connection to Ancestors



Wedding portrait of Jeanne Morningstar and Bob Kent.
Courtesy of artist.

Comforting Others



Beaded Stethoscope.
Image courtesy of Aarron York.



Community Pride



Abenaki artists Pat Leno and Chief Don Stevens.
Image courtesy of Diane Stevens.



N'mikwaldam – We remember



Tattoo Body Art. Image Courtesy of Melody Mackin.

Contact Us

Website
abenakiart.org

Follow us on Social Media
Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

Email
vera.sheehan@abenakiart.org

