



## Advancing Indigenous Forest Knowledge in the Northeast

*Research to support the cultural and intellectual sovereignty of Tribal forest traditions*

September 26, 2022

**Burlington, VT; Durham, NH; Orono, ME; Syracuse, NY** — The [Northeastern States Research Cooperative \(NSRC\)](#) is pleased to announce the funding of several new Indigenous Forest Knowledge Fund (IFKF) projects. The goal of the IFKF fund is to support traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) for Indigenous communities alongside other applied forest research.

In May 2022, NSRC announced the second year of funding for the IFKF, committing nearly \$300,000 to support projects specifically focused on the education, mentorship, and training of Indigenous youth in applied forest research and/or TEK about forest systems; new applied forest research that advances Tribal priorities; and synthesis and translation of forest research to advance communications, outreach, and economic programs for Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities.

Multiple strong proposals were submitted in this IFKF round; a committee of a Tribal leader and NSRC administrators evaluated each for fit to IFKF goals and requirements, clarity of project objectives, and quality of research approach and methods. Three projects were selected: moose monitoring on Penobscot Indian Nation lands; development of management guides for ash under the threat of emerald ash borer; and understanding regeneration and historical traditions of an Atlantic White Cedar swamp ecosystem utilized by Abenaki Nation citizens. The IFKF projects are in addition to the NSRC research projects that were awarded earlier this year and focused on the health of northern forest ecosystems and communities.

Federal funding comes from Congressional appropriations through a partnership with the research and development arm of the USDA Forest Service. The private sector, states, and other organizations offered matching funding to support the research on the Northern Forest and its 26 million acres in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

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### Monitoring Moose and Other Culturally Important Wildlife on Penobscot Indian Nation Lands Using Remote Cameras

**Project personnel & partners:** Benjamin Simpson (PI), Wildlife Biologist, Penobscot Indian Nation; Therese Donovan, Assistant Unit Leader, USGS Vermont Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit; Alexej Sirén, Postdoctoral Researcher, Vermont Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit; Laurence Clarfeld, Postdoctoral Researcher, Vermont Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit.

The Penobscot Indian Nation (PIN) has sole jurisdiction over 129,000 acres of land in Maine. The PIN manages these lands for the cultural activities of tribal members. One major priority is to conserve and manage wildlife as many species are culturally important and a source of food. Recent declines in regional moose populations due to winter ticks have caused concern among the Tribe. The purpose of this project is to develop a multi-species monitoring program using remote cameras to track population trends of moose and other wildlife species found on PIN lands. This project will help PIN sustain healthy populations of wildlife to protect cultural traditions and also serve as an educational tool to engage tribal members and preserve Penobscot culture.

### Building Stewardship Capacity: Protecting the Brown Ash of the Northern Forest

**Project personnel & partners:** John Daigle (PI), Professor of Forest Recreation, University of Maine; Tyler Everett, UMaine Graduate Student; Emily Francis, UMaine Graduate Student; Anthony D'Amato, Professor & Director of Forestry Program, University of Vermont; Suzanne Greenlaw, UMaine Graduate Student; Amanda Mahaffey, Deputy Director, Forest Stewards Guild; Darren Ranco, Professor of Anthropology & Coordinator of Native American Research, Wabanaki Center, University of Maine; Nathan W. Siegert, Forest Entomologist, U.S. Forest Service; Chuck Loring, Penobscot Nation, Department of Natural Resources; Clayton Sockabasin, Passamaquoddy Forestry Dept.; Dena Winslow, Mi'kmaq Nation, Department of Natural Resources; Sue Young, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indian; Allison Kanoti, State Entomologist, Maine Forest Service; tish carr, WaYs: Wabanaki Youth in Science, University of Maine.

This project promotes Tribal priorities through the production of management guides that offer management recommendations for addressing Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). These guides will help to inform management by Tribal Nations, foresters, loggers, and landowners working to address EAB in the northern forest. This project will use landowner and manager perceptions on ash best management practices, and the cultural significance of ash to guide our education and outreach.

### Supporting Abenaki Stewardship of the Ecologically Rare and Culturally Important Atlantic White Cedar Swamp Ecosystem *(Grant contract in progress)*

**Project personnel & partners:** Heidi Asbjornsen (PI), Professor of Ecosystem Ecology, University of New Hampshire; Michael Andrews, Land Protection Committee Member, The Society for the Protection of NH Forests; Teresa Cohn, Associate Professor of Natural Resources and the Environment, UNH; William Gould, Canoe Maker and Eastern Forest Cultural Advisor, Department of Cultural and Historic Resources, Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation; Brooks McCandlish, Forester, Bradford, NH; Brian Chenevert, Tribal Historian and Director, Cultural and Historic Preservation Department, Coosuk Band of the Abenaki Nation; Alexander Cotnoir, citizen of the Coosuk Band of the Abenaki Nation; Ann Eldridge, Bradford Conservation Commission; Sherry Gould, Special Project Coordinator, Cultural and Historic Preservation Department, Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation; Anne Payeur, Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust; Chief Don Stevens, Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe; Matthew Vadeboncoeur, Research Scientist, UNH

The overarching goal of this project is to support the capacity of the Abenaki Nation and its partners to promote the long-term ecological health, cultural value, and sustainable use of a rare and endangered Atlantic White Cedar (AWC) swamp ecosystem. The Bradford Bog, one of the most northern and well-preserved communities of AWC, is still actively utilized for traditional purposes by the Abenaki, who have expressed concern over the lack of AWC regeneration and declining health. This collaborative, transdisciplinary research project will directly advance Abenaki Tribal priorities related to understanding the regeneration dynamics, stand development processes, and historical traditions of the AWC swamp ecosystem, as a basis for developing a long-term plan for its sustainable stewardship.

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### **About the Northeastern States Research Cooperative**

NSRC (<https://nsrcforest.org>) is a competitive grant program for Northern Forest research, authorized by Federal legislation (Public Law 105-185), with allocations to the program directed by the USDA Forest Service. Since its inception, the NSRC has funded more than 345 projects, engaging 50 different institutions, agencies, and organizations across the northeast.

NSRC prioritizes problem-driven, engaged research with solid communications to stakeholders. Partnerships between researchers and practitioners are strongly encouraged, as are projects that aim to inform and align with the timeframes of management and policy decisions. To ensure alignment with on-the-ground issues and emerging priorities, Tribal consultants and an External Advisory Committee representing forest industry, natural resource management, conservation, wildlife, and economic development set the research agenda for the NSRC.

NSRC is jointly directed through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's Northern Research Station and a designated institution in each of the four Northern Forest States (Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Vermont, the University of New Hampshire in cooperation with the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation in New Hampshire, the Center for Research on Sustainable Forests at the University of Maine, and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry). These institutions are all equal opportunity providers.

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