

# NIWESKOK: *From the Stars to Seeds* Farm & Land Return Project

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## Mission

Niweskok, a collaboration of food and medicine providers, rematriates Wabanaki lifeways through engaging with our kinship responsibilities and reclaiming traditional foods & healing. We prioritize restoring the Penobscot Bay region as a Wabanaki foodhub.

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## Who we are

Niweskok is responsible to our communities, our peoples of the Wabanaki Confederacy (Penobscot, Wolastoqiyik, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Abenaki). We are Wabanaki farmers, social workers, doctors, public health professionals, nutritionists and educators who have been on the land and leading work in our communities for decades. Collectively, we have over 100 years of experience and collaboration in food sovereignty initiatives. Niweskok (while named Eastern Woodlands Rematriation) was the 2021 recipient of the US Food Sovereignty Alliance Food Sovereignty Prize. In addition members of the team have achieved fellowships acknowledging our leadership from notable foundations and organizations such as, NDN Collective, Soul Fire Farm, Indigenous Environmental Network, Native Organizers' Alliance and Women's Earth Alliance.

We are poised to bring our expertise and skills as farmers, land tenders and educators to our own farm. Currently the cultivation of our ancestral crops is spread across several locations, on borrowed and leased lands, and many of our educational activities are on public access and trust lands. As a result of the lack of a home base, we have had to pause opportunities for infrastructure development, capacity building and growth.

## Vision for the Farm

- Coastal land rematriation in traditional Penobscot territory revives our safe access to an area in which we have been the most thoroughly removed and disconnected due to colonization.
- We will be an education hub of Wabanaki foodways emphasizing climate adaptation, reciprocity & ecological regeneration within agriculture, fisheries, and agroforestry.
- We will provide space to create a traditional birth center that focuses on culturally reflective practices and empowering birthing people while improving health outcomes.
- We will care for the earth with intent as our ancestors did, continuing practices embedded in whole ecosystems. Using methods of agroforestry, we will nurture the health of the land and contribute to regional food security by creating integrated management of livestock, forests and pastures.
- The land acquisition will benefit the broader Wabanaki food system and local agricultural community by developing infrastructure for food production and processing, including a butchery, greenhouses, community smoker, outdoor kitchen classroom, and plant nursery for agroforestry projects.
- This project is complementary to the existing Wabanaki land-based projects in other bioregions of our homelands.
- This land return will support coliving for Wabanaki engaged in community food work.

## Purchasing Goose River Farm

The horse and cattle farm in Swanville/Penobscot territory is six miles from the ocean and within one hour from the nearest tribal community. This 245 acre farm has one mile of road frontage, 37 acres open fields, 163 acres forested, and 30 acres of wetlands surrounding the Goose River and Smith Pond. It also contains three ponds within a wildlife corridor. This exceptionally well maintained property, barns and home, has agricultural soils that are prime and of statewide significance having been managed organically.



## Goose River Farm as Niweskok's Forever Home

- **Wabanaki Rematriation School** will have a land base to become an educational center for Wabanaki foodways, hosting workshops and offering educational intensives and camps for Wabanaki families and kin.
- **Mawiomi Garden & Youth Apprenticeships** will be able to sleep and wake with our corn and crops for the first time ever! Permanence is transformative; building a deeper relationship to the land we care for, getting to know the light, wind and life of the land- not just in passing work.
- **Wabanaki Food Producer Capacity Building** will become much more impactful through scaling up our earth-based economic practices, production of integrated silvopasture & food forestry, and development of agricultural infrastructure, we will offer more hands-on learning opportunities. Proximity to the coast for sustenance & commercial fisheries.
- **Wabanaki Community Apothecary**, while caretaking the existing farm biodiversity and additionally establishing culturally significant plant nurseries, will nurture ecological health as well as human health. The Community Apothecary's basis for teaching, harvesting and processing traditional medicines will be deeply amplified.
- **Indigenous Life Cycles Teachings** work will take root through a coliving community for Wabanaki engaged in our food & educational work. Our community will be designed to support across our life spans, which will include developing a birth center. Nurturing cycles of the earth includes tending to our own life cycles as well.

## Farm Return Project Partners

LegacyWorks, Somali Bantu Community Association, Bernstein Shur, Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, Maine Farmland Trust, Coastal Mountains Land Trust, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Community Foundation, Soul Fire Farm, American Farmland Trust, Carol Wishcamper, The Stone Foundation, The Nature Conservancy Maine, Maine Organic Growers and Farmers Association, Androscoggin Bank

**To support our vision, contact us at [alivia@niweskok.org](mailto:alivia@niweskok.org) or donate directly at <https://www.niweskok.org/donate>.**