



FOUR DIRECTIONS
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Plan

November 14, 2024

Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Initiative Leadership Team

- Beth Aucoin, Purchased and Referred Care Administrator, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
- Christina Kane Gibson, Economic Development Director, Mi'kmaq Nation
- Darrell Newell, Vice Chief, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkomikuk
- Ernest Neptune, Vice Chief, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik
- James E. Francis, Sr., Director and Tribal Historian, Penobscot Nation



International Institute
of Tourism Studies

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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WABANAKI

Cultural Tourism Plan



Prepared by
International Institute
of Tourism Studies
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



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The Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Plan

- **serves** as a five-year strategic blueprint for collaborative and respectful development of cultural tourism that benefits Wabanaki communities, entrepreneurs, and businesses while offering authentic and educational experiences to visitors
- **presents** a shared vision for the future of Wabanaki cultural tourism, establishes guiding tenets, and responds to the highest priority challenges related to the development, management, and promotion of Wabanaki cultural tourism
- **outlines** strategic initiatives to guide collaboration and investment for sustainable cultural tourism
- **is designed** as a framework that will evolve to support Wabanaki leaders and organizations as they develop and manage tourism

Inventory of Existing Conditions

- Desktop Research
- Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Situation Analysis Report

On-Site Assessment

- One-day summit
- Site visits
- Interviews
- Focus Groups

Participatory Visioning and Planning

- On-site and virtual strategic planning sessions
- Draft Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Plan

Plan Development and Validation

- Virtual review and validation sessions
- Final Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Plan

Wabanaki community leaders, industry leaders, and partners gave generously of their time to support the development of the WCTP.

5 leaders representing Wabanaki communities served on the WCTI Leadership Team, participating in regular meetings and work sessions over two years and guiding the development of the plan.

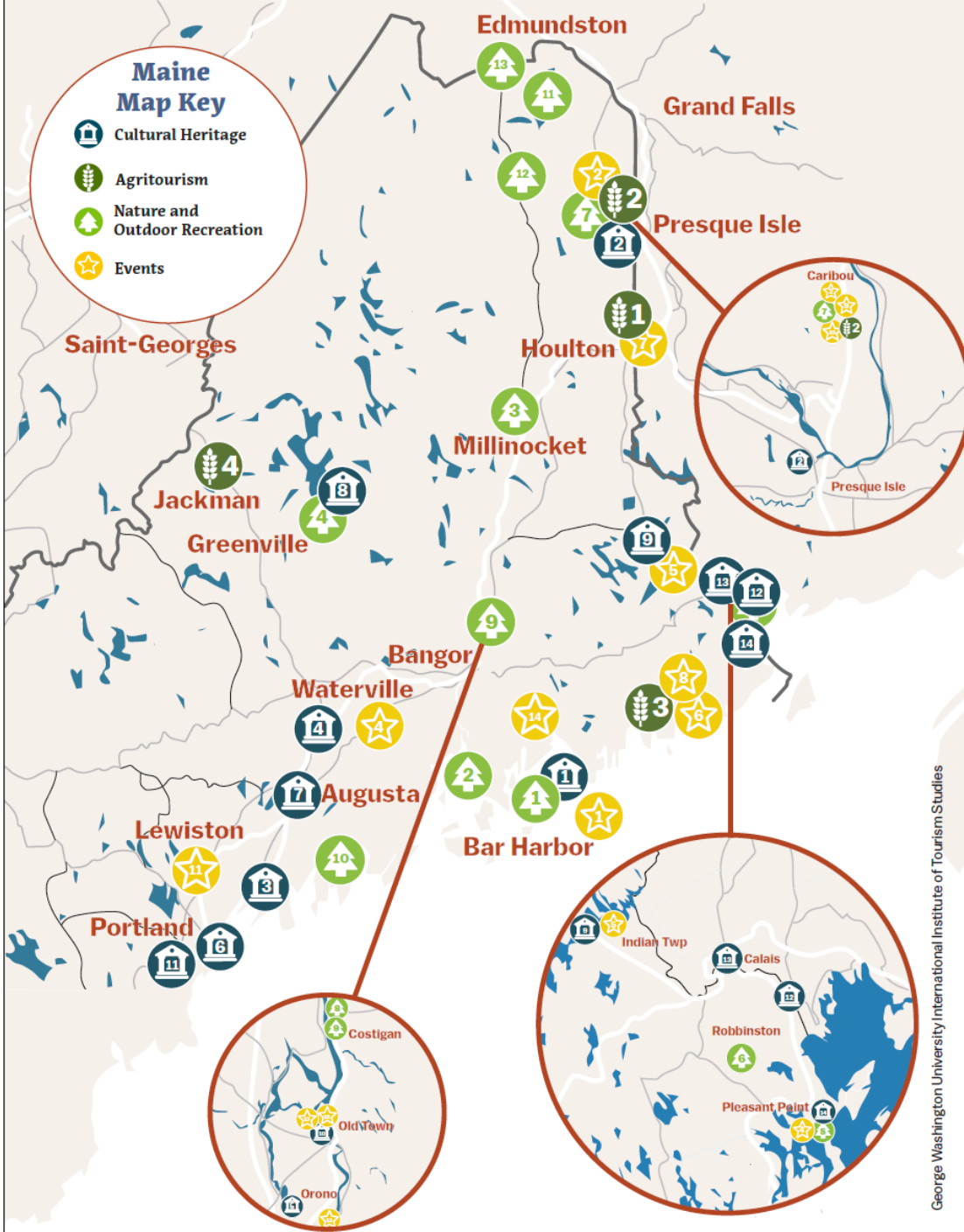
85 stakeholders from Wabanaki communities, the State of Maine, local and regional municipalities, tourism businesses, natural and cultural heritage organizations, and academic institutions participated in two in-person visioning and planning summits, ten focus groups/interviews, and six virtual work sessions.

200+ Wabanaki community members participated in the 2023 Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Community Survey.

Economic Recovery Corps

- Partnership between the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) that places 65 fellows in under-resourced communities to accelerate locally-driven economic development.
- 2.5-year program
- Goal of further developing the entrepreneurial ecosystem around cultural tourism.

ECONOMIC
RECOVERY
CORPS



Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Assets



Cultural Heritage

- 1 Abbe Museum
- 2 Mi'kmaq Nation Museum
- 3 Bowdoin College Museum of Art
- 4 Colby College Museum of Art
- 5 Hudson Museum at the University of Maine
- 6 Maine Historical Society & Wadsworth-Longfellow House
- 7 Maine State Museum
- 8 Moosehead Cultural Heritage Center
- 9 Passamaquoddy Cultural Heritage Museum in Motahkomikuk
- 10 Penobscot Nation Museum
- 11 Portland Museum of Art
- 12 St. Croix Island
- 13 Wabanaki Cultural Center and Museum
- 14 Waponhaki Museum and Resource Center in Sipayik



Events

- 1 Dawnland Festival of Arts & Ideas (formerly known as Abbe Museum Indian Market and Native American Festival & Basketmakers Market)
- 2 Bear Feast
- 3 Common Ground Country Fair
- 4 Passamaquoddy Days at Sipayik
- 5 Passamaquoddy Motahkomikuk Community Days
- 6 Machias Wild Blueberry Festival
- 7 Metaksonekiyak Community Day (Formerly Maliseet Recognition Day)
- 8 Margaretta Days Festival and Craft Fair
- 9 Mawiomi of Tribes
- 10 Mi'kmaq Farms Winter Market
- 11 Wabanaki Arts Market at Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village
- 12 Penobscot Nation Community Days
- 13 Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail Festival
- 14 Wabanaki Spring Social
- 15 Wabanaki Winter Market



Nature and Outdoor Recreation

- 1 Acadia National Park
- 2 Holbrook Island Sanctuary
- 3 Katahdin Woods & Water National Monument
- 4 Mount Kineo
- 5 Old Sow Whirlpool
- 6 Penknife Lakes
- 7 Spruce Haven
- 8 Sugar Island
- 9 Wabanaki Thoreau Trail
- 10 Whaleback Shell Midden State Historic Site
- 11 Fish River chain of lakes
- 12 Mi'kmaq tribal land that abuts the National Wildlife Refuge and International Trail System
- 13 Pine Tree Trail



Agritourism

- 1 Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum
- 2 Mi'kmaq Farms & Fish Hatchery
- 3 Passamaquoddy Wild Blueberry Company
- 4 Passamaquoddy Maple Company

Vision

Wabanaki tourism flourishes with collaborative community leadership and participation, offering experiential and educational visitor experiences that honor, preserve, and protect the cultural assets and lands of the Wabanaki people, while fostering economic growth, autonomy, and well-being.

Core Values	Guiding Principles
<p>Community-Empowered Leadership</p> <p>Successful Wabanaki tourism governance comes from representative, collaborative community leadership.</p>	<p>Wabanaki tourism planning and development is led by Wabanaki citizens who represent their communities.</p> <p>We engage, respect, and value all voices. We foster youth and elder participation and collaboration. We cooperate with each other and collaborate with other communities.</p>
<p>Respect and Protection of Culture</p> <p>The key to harmony and sustainability in a Wabanaki tourism ecosystem is respect for and protection of our cultural heritage.</p>	<p>We acknowledge the individuality of our communities while supporting a cohesive and unified Wabanaki tourism ecosystem.</p> <p>We foster respect, promote harmony, and acknowledge individual distinctions between Wabanaki communities and between those communities and other communities in Maine.</p> <p>We preserve and enforce the preservation of Wabanaki cultures, sacred sites, and knowledge.</p>

Core Values	Guiding Principles
<p>Education</p> <p>Communication of Wabanaki history, challenges, values, and goals is critical to shaping visitor, resident, and industry attitudes and behaviors.</p>	<p>We effectively communicate our sovereignty and our high Wabanaki visitor standards and expectations to stem stereotyping and influence visitor behavior and industry impacts.</p> <p>We share our knowledge and traditions with our youth.</p>
<p>Managed Growth</p> <p>Tourism governance through intergenerational and intercommunity collaboration, guided by principles of responsible and sustainable growth, supports the long-term integrity of tourism assets.</p>	<p>We support consistent, sustainable visitor policies as well as individual community growth policies.</p> <p>We are committed to the creation and expansion of cultural experiences that match community expectations, resources, and capacity.</p>
<p>Environmental Stewardship</p> <p>Preservation and regeneration of the natural environment is essential in maintaining a resilient visitor economy and an important Tribal value.</p>	<p>We honor, protect, and support stewardship of Wabanaki land, water, and animals.</p> <p>We nurture traditional Native values of environmental interconnection and sacredness through community engagement; we partner with other landowners who champion stewardship of the environment.</p>



1.

Effective regional collaboration for advancement of cultural tourism

2.

Enhanced support and local leadership for cultural tourism

3.

Increased entrepreneurship and diverse Wabanaki cultural tourism experiences

4.

Community-driven infrastructure and creative partnerships

5.

Wabanaki brand development and promotion



Outcomes

The WCTP's Six Goals provide direction and purpose to strategic initiatives and priority actions to be implemented

1. Maintain collaborative tourism management and plan implementation
2. Foster community engagement and support for Wabanaki tourism
3. Support entrepreneurship and the market readiness of tourism businesses
4. Create and deliver Wabanaki cultural experiences
5. Enhance wayfinding and placemaking
6. Develop a Wabanaki Tourism brand and increase awareness of Wabanaki experiences and events



Goals	Strategic Initiatives
 Goal 1 Maintain collaborative tourism management and plan implementation.	<p>1.1 Establish a regional learning-action network to facilitate collaborative development and management of tourism.</p> <p>1.2 Build local capacity for tourism within the Wabanaki Nations.</p> <p>1.3 Develop a tourism monitoring system to track tourism activities and their impacts in Wabanaki Nations.</p> <p>1.4 Establish a long-term tourism management structure to ensure sustainable advancement of cultural tourism.</p>
 Goal 2 Foster community engagement and support for Wabanaki tourism.	<p>2.1 Facilitate ongoing community engagement activities within Wabanaki Nations.</p> <p>2.2 Enhance tribal councils' understanding of and collaboration on tourism initiatives.</p> <p>2.3 Offer educational programs about Wabanaki Nations and their tourism efforts to tourism operators and frontline personnel across Maine.</p>



Goal 3

**Support entrepreneurship
and the market readiness of
tourism businesses.**

- 3.1 Support Wabanaki entrepreneurs in launching and growing tourism businesses.
- 3.2 Develop and implement standards for Wabanaki tourism operators.
- 3.3 Equip Wabanaki tourism operators with the skills to engage effectively with the travel trade for sales and marketing purposes.



Goal 4

**Create and deliver Wabanaki
cultural experiences.**

- 4.1 Train entrepreneurs to develop cultural tourism experiences.
- 4.2 Increase the number of trained and certified Wabanaki tour guides.
- 4.3 Create and promote visitor etiquette guidelines.
- 4.4 Develop Wabanaki cultural tour itineraries along travel routes.



Goal 5

Enhance wayfinding
and placemaking.

5.1 Create and share Wabanaki tourism wayfinding resources.

5.2 Provide direction for the development of new visitor infrastructure, facilities, and attractions.

5.3 Promote the development of Wabanaki-owned accommodation options.

5.4 Enhance the welcoming feel of Wabanaki communities and priority attractions.



Goal 6

Develop a Wabanaki Tourism
brand and increase awareness
of Wabanaki experiences
and events.

6.1 Develop a “Wabanaki Tourism” brand and marketing strategy.

6.2 Create and maintain a Wabanaki Tourism website and visitor guide.

6.3 Collaborate with the MOT and partners to promote Wabanaki tourism.

6.4 Provide marketing and promotion training and resources to Wabanaki entrepreneurs and community members.

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 Goal 4 Create and deliver Wabanaki cultural experiences.	4.1 Train entrepreneurs to develop cultural tourism experiences. 4.2 Increase the number of trained and certified Wabanaki tour guides. 4.3 Create and promote visitor etiquette guidelines. 4.4 Develop Wabanaki cultural tour itineraries along travel routes.
 Goal 5 Enhance wayfinding and placemaking.	5.1 Create and share Wabanaki tourism wayfinding resources. 5.2 Provide direction for the development of new visitor infrastructure, facilities, and attractions. 5.3 Promote the development of Wabanaki-owned accommodation options. 5.4 Enhance the welcoming feel of Wabanaki communities and priority attractions.
 Goal 6 Develop a Wabanaki Tourism brand and increase awareness of Wabanaki experiences and events.	6.1 Develop a "Wabanaki Tourism" brand and marketing strategy. 6.2 Create and maintain a Wabanaki Tourism website and visitor guide. 6.3 Collaborate with the MOT and partners to promote Wabanaki tourism. 6.4 Provide marketing and promotion training and resources to Wabanaki entrepreneurs and community members.

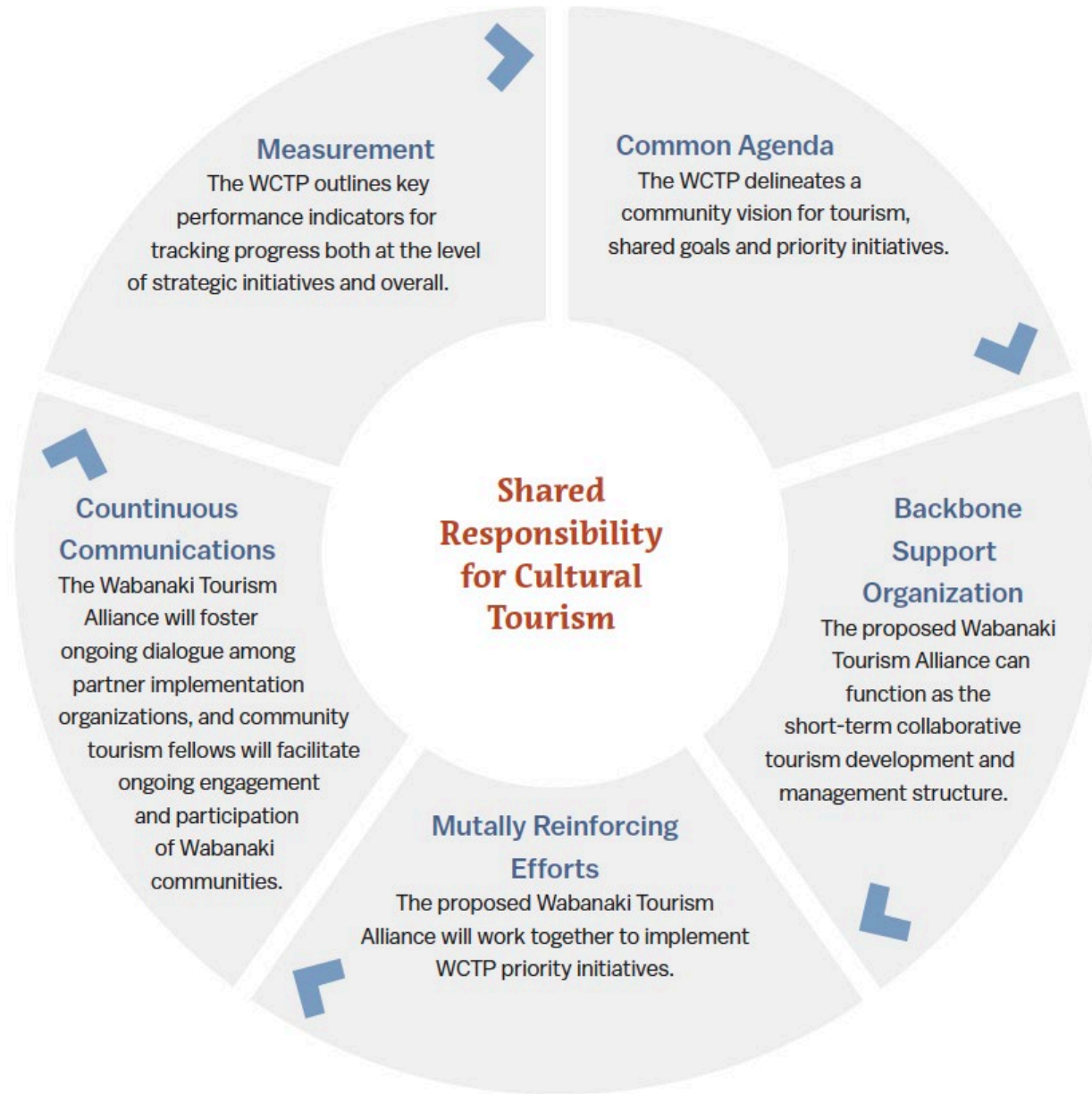
Strategic Initiatives Small Group Activity

Please review the listed 6 main goals and strategic initiatives on your handout and use the following protocol:

- **Individually (4 min)** review the document and record:
 - ❖ 3 strategic initiatives you connected with
 - ❖ 2 lingering questions you may have about these goals
 - ❖ 1 opportunity that you see for engagement
- **With your group (4 min)** discuss your notes, share insights and feedback
- **With your group (2 min)** select points relevant to share with whole group and a group speaker
- **Whole group (15-20 min)** shares poignant take-aways

Regional Action: *Wabanaki Nations work together to provide strategic leadership and lead plan implementation*

- **Proposed Ad Hoc Network:** (Wabanaki Tourism Alliance) led by tribal and community leaders from each nation; composed of Wabanaki community organizations and businesses, and key state partners such as MOT, public land managers, and tourism industry partners
- **Interim Structure:** The network can serve as an interim structure for the collaborative development and management of Wabanaki tourism
- **Bridge to Permanent Structure:** The network can serve as a bridge between the current situation and a permanent structure to be defined over the first year or two of plan implementation



Goals	Strategic Initiatives	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1. Maintain collaborative tourism management and plan implementation.	1.1 Establish a regional learning-action network to facilitate collaborative development and management of tourism.					
	1.2 Build local capacity for tourism within the Wabanaki Nations.					
	1.3 Develop a tourism monitoring system to track tourism activities and their impacts in Wabanaki Nations.					
	1.4 Establish a long-term tourism management structure to ensure sustainable advancement of cultural tourism.					
2. Foster community engagement and support for Wabanaki tourism.	2.1 Facilitate ongoing community engagement activities within Wabanaki Nations.					
	2.2 Enhance tribal councils' understanding of and collaboration on tourism initiatives.					
	2.3 Offer educational programs about Wabanaki Nations and their tourism efforts to tourism operators and frontline personnel across Maine.					
3. Support entrepreneurship and the market readiness of tourism businesses.	3.1 Support Wabanaki entrepreneurs in launching and growing tourism businesses.					
	3.2 Develop and implement standards for Wabanaki tourism operators.					
	3.3 Equip Wabanaki tourism operators with the skills to engage effectively with the travel trade for sales and marketing purposes.					
4. Create and deliver Wabanaki cultural experiences.	4.1 Train entrepreneurs to develop cultural tourism experiences.					
	4.2 Increase the number of trained and certified Wabanaki tour guides.					
	4.3 Create and promote visitor etiquette guidelines.					
	4.4 Develop Wabanaki cultural tour itineraries along travel routes.					
5. Enhance wayfinding and placemaking.	5.1 Create and share Wabanaki tourism wayfinding resources.					
	5.2 Provide direction for the development of new visitor infrastructure, facilities, and attractions.					
	5.3 Promote the development of Wabanaki-owned accommodation options					
	5.4 Enhance the welcoming feel of Wabanaki communities and priority attractions.					
6. Develop a Wabanaki Tourism brand and increase awareness of Wabanaki experiences and events.	6.1 Develop a "Wabanaki Tourism" brand and marketing strategy.					
	6.2 Create and maintain a Wabanaki Tourism website and visitor guide.					
	6.3 Collaborate with the MOT and partners to promote Wabanaki tourism.					
	6.4 Provide marketing and promotion training and resources to Wabanaki community members.					

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Year 1 Strategic Actions

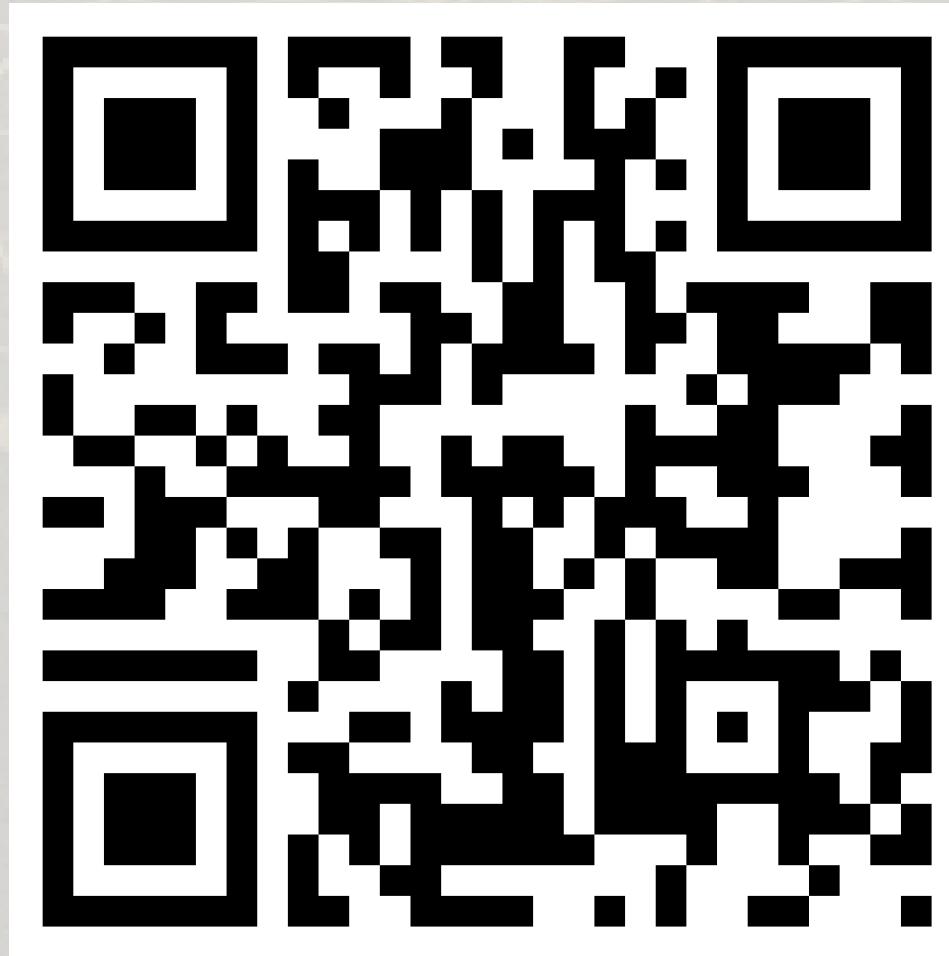
- Establish a regional learning-action network to facilitate collaborative development and management of tourism
- Build local capacity for tourism within the Wabanaki Nations.
- Establish long-term tourism management structure to ensure sustainable advancement of cultural tourism.
- Facilitate ongoing community engagement activities within Wabanaki Nations.
- Offer educational programs about Wabanaki Nations and their tourism efforts to tourism operators and frontline personnel across Maine.
- Equip Wabanaki tourism operators with the skills to engage effectively with the travel trade for sales and marketing purposes.
- Train entrepreneurs to develop cultural tourism experiences.
- Develop a “Wabanaki Tourism” brand and marketing strategy.

Year 2 Strategic Actions

- Develop a tourism monitoring system to track tourism activities and their impacts in Wabanaki Nations.
- Enhance tribal councils’ understanding of and collaboration on tourism initiatives.
- Support Wabanaki entrepreneurs in launching and growing tourism businesses.
- Develop and implement standards for Wabanaki tourism operators.
- Increase the number of trained and certified Wabanaki tour guides.
- Create and promote visitor etiquette guidelines.
- Create and share Wabanaki tourism wayfinding resources.
- Promote the development of Wabanaki-owned accommodation options.
- Create & maintain a Wabanaki Tourism website and visitor guide.
- Collaborate with MOT and other partners to promote Wabanaki tourism.



How do you plan to engage with the Wabanaki
Cultural Tourism Initiative?



Contact Us!



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