

NEWSLETTER



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

ICWA 's "On Your Own"

Elders' Center Monthly meal schedule

Staff Spotlight

Tribal News & Announcements

Boys & Girls Club News

Bingocize!

Members of the HBMI Tribal Council met with Peter Forbes, founder of First Light, to finalize a land acquisition plan for the tribe. Taking part are, from left, John Flewelling, Forbes, Crystal Tucker, Clarissa Sabattis, Beth Aucoin, Suzanne Desiderio and Joshua Toner.

HBMI expands Tribal lands in Monticello

MONTICELLO, Maine – The According to its [website](#), First Houlton Band of Maliseet Light is a bridge between Indians have vastly increased conservation organizations the amount of Tribal lands it and Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet and Mi'kmaq communities who holds.

Thanks in part to a seek to expand Wabanaki collaboration with First Light stewardship of land. First Light Learning Journey and The aspires to reciprocity: its goal is Nature Conservancy, the Tribe to expand Wabanaki access recently acquired 1,327 acres and stewardship of land for along the North Branch of the prosperity and to create a Meduxnekeag River in stronger conservation Monticello. The land abuts the movement that includes and Tribally-owned Wilderness reflects Indigenous expertise Pines Campground. and perspective.

see page 2

Tribal lands

Continued from Page 1

Susan Young, Real Estate /Natural Resources Director for HBMI, said the land acquisition was the culmination of a two-year process to return the land along the North Branch of the Meduxnekeag River in Monticello to the Maliseet people. First Light, The Nature Conservancy and the Conservation Fund each played a role in this acquisition.

“This parcel provides the tribe with 3.5 miles of river frontage on the North Branch of the Meduxnekeag River,” Young said. “HBMI has been doing instream restoration in the North Branch to improve aquatic habitat for cold water fishes especially Atlantic salmon that once called the Meduxnekeag River and its tributaries home.”.The Nature Conservancy will continue to work with HBMI to attain its stewardship goals for this parcel.

Young, along with Tribal Chief Clarissa Sabattis, first began working with First Light and various conservation partners around seven years ago to begin exploring the possibility of expanding Wabanaki access to conserved lands in Maine and increasing land return opportunities for the Wabanaki nations.

“First Light and their delegation of conservation partners, including the Nature Conservancy, are committed to the return of land to the Wabanaki people and are involved with the Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship, a non-profit made up of the 5 federally recognized tribes in Maine working to restore access and ownership to the Wabanaki,” Young said.

The parcel of land, in addition to providing miles of river frontage, provides a variety of forest types and wildlife habitat. According to Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP), this parcel contains wild brook trout priority habitat, inland wading bird and waterfowl habitat, rare plant habitat and some deer wintering areas. Black Ash for basket making, along with other culturally significant plants are also found on the land.

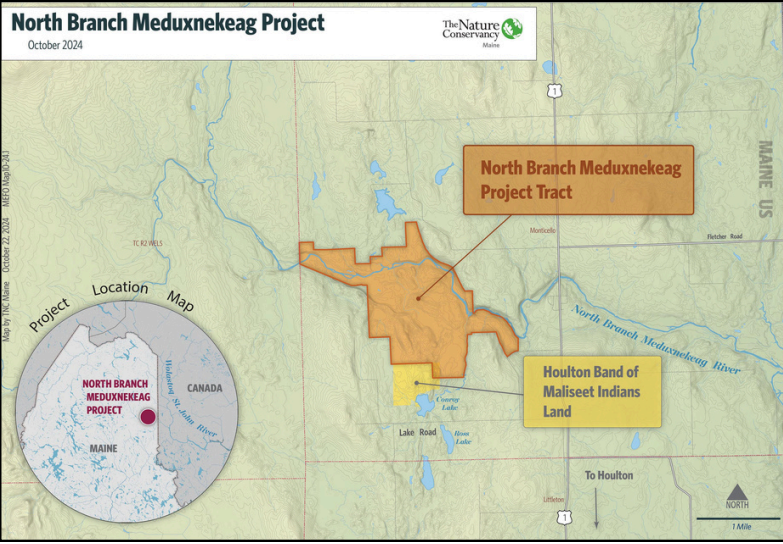
Joining Young in representing HBMI on the commission is Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Isaac St. John.

“This parcel significantly adds to the tribe’s land holdings and represents the largest of the tribe’s woodlots,” Young added.

Some of the initial plans for the parcel include increased opportunities for hunting, gathering and other cultural activities for tribal citizens and increased access to wild/undeveloped areas for the tribe’s Wilderness Pines Campground.

Long term management will include timber management for forest and ecosystem health and potentially tribal income. HBMI has a goal of expanding its Wilderness Pines Campground trail system and adding more camp sites to the park. Increased cultural tourism opportunities are also part of the expansion, Sabattis said.

The tribe plans to submit a “fee to trust application” to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to convert this parcel to trust land to provide greater opportunities to use federal programs for the long term stewardship of this property.



Elders' Calendar

March 2025

Elder Center phone # -- 532-7780
 Elder Coordinator -- Danya Boyce
 Cook -- Mark Lewis

All regular meals begin at 11 a.m.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
--------	--------	---------	-----------	----------	--------	----------

23 24 25 26 27 28 1

2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Baked Ham
 Mashed Potatoes
 Mixed Vegetables
 Dinner Roll
 Pudding w/Cool Whip

Kielbasa
 Potatoes w/ green
 peppers and onions
 Sliced Tomatoes,
 Cucumbers
 Oat Bread
 Cake

9
 Spring Ahead
 1 Hour!



11
 Hamburger Patties
 w/sautéed onions
 Oven Roasted
 Potatoes, Spinach
 Cook's Choice Bread
 Fruit Crisp

13
 Meatloaf w/Gravy
 Mashed Potatoes
 Green Beans / Rolls
 100% Fruit Juice
 Brownies

16 17 18 19 20 21 22

Happy
 St. Patrick's
 Day

Chop Suey
 Broccoli
 Dinner Roll
 Ice Cream

Spring Fling BINGO!
 Build Your Own
 Sandwich
 Chips/Soup
 Sadie's Bread/Rolls
 Fruit Salad

23 24 25 26 27 28 1

Baked Pork Chops
 Stove Top/Potatoes
 Carrots
 Wheat/Oat Bread
 Jello w/ Cool Whip

Baked Beans
 Hot Dogs, Rolls
 Potato Salad
 Sadie's Rolls
 Cupcakes



Tribal News & Announcements

Indian Child Welfare Act

On Your Own

The following is a new monthly series offering a short guide to your legal rights and responsibilities as an adult.

Turning 18 gives you certain rights you did not have before, as well as certain responsibilities. At age 18, for example, you can vote, make a will, sue in your own name, make a contract to buy a car, rent an apartment, take out a loan, obtain medical treatment without parental consent, be completely independent from parental control, and apply for credit in your own name.

At the same time, being an adult means that any criminal charges against you are tried in adult criminal court, rather than juvenile court. You may be sued by others on contracts you made, you are eligible for jury duty, and if you are male, you are required to register for a possible military draft.

Every month, ICWA will include more information of people's rights until we give you an idea of how much people's (On YOUR Own) rights change as we become adults.



Gwydion Griffith, left, digital navigator for the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, presents a laptop to Cody Franceschina as part of the free computer program partnership between the Tribe and the National Digital Equity Center.

Computer program offered

Are you a Tribal Citizen who is interested in obtaining a free computer? Or are you interested in learning digital skills and affordable internet options?

The Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the National Digital Equity Center have partnered to provide a free device program for Tribal Citizens.

To be eligible for a device, individuals need to complete the following steps: Enroll in the NDEC, complete an income guideline form and sign an End of User agreement; Attend an Individualized Learning Plan interview; Complete our Basic Internet Safety course and one additional-related course (2-hour session); attend a follow up meeting one month after receiving the device.

The National Digital Equity Center, a 501c3 non-profit, is a nationally recognized organization with a mission to close the digital divide across the United States.

For more information, or to start the application process, contact Gwydion Griffith, digital navigator, at 207-220-7969 or email gwydion@digitalequitycenter.org



Boys & Girls Club receives 'Little Library' grant

HOULTON, Maine – Tribal community members will soon have a new way to obtain children's books for their family without having to leave the Maliseet Reservation.

The Boys & Girls Club of Maliseets has been selected as a recipient of an Indigenous Library Grant, which will provide the tribe with materials to make a "Little Library" box, to be located at the Boys & Girls Club, located on the Foxcroft Road.

In addition to the materials to create the little library, the tribe will also receive a supply of books to place inside. Books can be taken home and kept, or brought back to the little library when they are done with them.

"The library will be free access to books that will support educational and personal growth for the youth in our community," explained Kayla Shrout, unit director for the club. "Every couple of weeks I will be rotating books."

March is a busy month for Boys & Girls Club

In March, the Boys & Girls Club of Maliseets has several exciting initiatives planned to engage and inspire youth.

Every two weeks, teens will have the opportunity to participate in the "Cooking Matters Class," where they will learn valuable cooking and nutrition skills.

The Art Club will also be starting, offering youth the chance to explore their creativity under the guidance of a local indigenous artist. Participation in the Art Club was optional, and youth signed up based on their interest.

Additionally, the Club will proudly send two youth to represent us at USET in Washington, D.C., for a week of leadership and cultural enrichment.

To close out the month, we will be hosting another Teen Takeover Day, giving teens a chance to lead, connect, and make their voices heard within the Club.

In 2022, the [Indigenous Library Program](#) was created to grant little libraries to improve access to books where Indigenous people are located in the United States and Canada. Little Free Library is a nonprofit organization based in St. Paul, Minn. Its mission is to be a catalyst for building community, inspiring readers, and expanding book access for all through a global network of volunteer-led Little Free Library book-exchange boxes.

Little Free Library grants no-cost book-sharing boxes where needed most on tribal lands and in Indigenous communities in the United States and Canada. It works with Indigenous community leaders and members to place book exchanges in locations where book access is important to improving literacy. Read about how this culturally responsive program began with the [Native Library Initiative](#).

Through this program, Little Free Library aims to: strengthen community; inspire readers; expand easy book access; support positive literacy outcomes; and make Little Free Libraries available in high-need locations serving Indigenous Peoples.



New Food Distribution Program center nears completion

Construction is nearing completion for the HBMI Food Distribution Program's new location on U.S. Route 1, in front of Rollerama.

According to Travis Benson, program director, participation in the program has been very strong, even though they are operating in a temporary location at the Tribal Food Pantry.

"The participation has been going well with our temporary facility with the delivery-only option right now," Benson said. "We should be in our new facility by end of March or early April at the latest."

Applications for the Food Distribution Program are still being accepted. For additional information or to request an application, contact Benson at tbenson@maliseets.com or 207-267-0895 or Carrie Peterson, program coordinator, at cpeterson@maliseets.com or 207-532-8919.

Staff Spotlight

Through a co-operative agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Houlton Band of Maliseets' Natural Resources Department recently expanded with the addition of a Fisheries Biologist. Carolyn Merriam, a Massachusetts native, joined the staff in late 2024.

She will work with HBMI and our various partners to expand our watershed work including, culvert evaluation, instream restoration work and more.

"I grew up in Massachusetts and developed a strong connection to the outdoors through hiking, biking, and canoeing across New England," Merriam said. "This early passion for the environment shaped my education and career, ultimately leading me to the field of fisheries."

Merriam is a recent graduate from the University of Maine where she studied the movements of Atlantic salmon in Maine and has previously worked with a variety of sea-run fishes. "I am committed to understanding and protecting these critical aquatic ecosystems," Merriam said.



Carolyn Merriam
Fisheries Biologist

'Bingocize' brings Maliseet community together

HOULTON, Maine – Staying active is one of the keys to a healthy lifestyle, but doing so in the winter months can be tricky.

To help in that venture, the Houlton Band of Maliseets' Health and Wellness Center has found a new, fun way to keep people engaged and active with the introduction of "Bingocize."

According to Krystal Caron, CHR/Safety Officer, "Bingocize" is an evidenced-based program for either exercise, nutrition or fall prevention. The Health Center opted to focus on fall prevention for its initial trial of the 10-week program to meet the needs of many Tribal Elders.

Twice a week, those enrolled in the program enjoy an evening of playing Bingo and learning new exercises to strengthen their core and improve balance in a fun-filled environment. "Bingocizers" play two 45-60 minute games per week for ten weeks consisting of exercises designed to improve all functional fitness including range of motion, balance, muscle strength, and cardio-respiratory endurance.

The primary goals of "Bingocize" are to help older adults and those with disabilities: Improve and/or maintain mobility/independence; Learn and use health information focused on falls reduction, improved nutrition, and other health-related behaviors; and Engage in social settings.

Bingocize

Continued from page 6

Sessions feature a vast array of music selections to help lighten the mood and increase the enjoyment. Songs cover a wide genre including 1970s classics like “Staying Alive” by the Bee Gees; 1960s songs from the Beatles; and 1950s selections from Elvis, among others.

Participants start out each session with a traditional Bingo card, but after a few balls have been called, they take a quick break to perform an exercise routine. Those exercises are often low-impact such as walking in place or arm stretches.

“It’s all about getting people to exercise and strengthen parts of their bodies to help with day-to-day function,” Caron said. “Our goal is to help them prevent injuries from things like falls.”

All those in attendance are also given “Bingocize” cards to take home so they can continue their exercises. Some “Bingocizers” have to name the artists of the songs to see if they get them right as well.

Halfway through the 10-week session, participation has far exceeded organizers expectations. “I first thought we would probably get about 6-10 people,” Caron said. “But we have never had less than 15 show up. Some nights we have as many as 20. People are bringing friends and we have a number of Tribal Elders who really look forward to this event.”

The look of joy on participants faces makes the extra work worthwhile, Caron added, with some going out of their way to show improving muscles or biceps. “You can see their faces and smiles shows how much they enjoy these classes,” she said.

One of those Tribal Elders, Sheila LeBlanc, said she looks forward to the event each week as it has helped her in a number of ways.



“I really love the music and camaraderie of Bingocize,” LeBlanc said. “I feel like the exercises have really helped me with my strength and balance. Plus, it’s a lot of fun.”

Assisting Caron with the program is Maya Gardiner, certified physical trainer with the Maliseet Fitness Center.

For more information about “Bingocize,” contact Caron at 207-532-2240 ext. 150 or email kcaron@maliseets.com.

Internet safety courses offered

Gwydion Griffith, our digital navigator, is offering a number of courses that will be hosted at the Social Services/Housing computer room.

Courses in March include: “Basic Internet Safety,” March 10, 6 p.m.; “iPad Basics,” March 17, 6 p.m.; and “Identifying Frauds and Scams,” March 18, 6 p.m.

Some courses are more than one session and all have limited space, so people should reach out to Gwydion at ggriffith@maliseets.com to get more information and reserve a seat!

Gardiner achieves personal fitness trainer certification

HOULTON, Maine – The Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians has a new certified personal trainer on its staff following the promotion of Maya Gardiner.

Gardiner joined HBMI in 2023 as the Maliseet Fitness Center attendant, assisting Tribal Citizens and HBMI staff with the use of the facilities, which include a variety of exercise bicycles, treadmills, elliptical machines and weights.

Now, as a CPT, Gardiner will be able to offer new programs at the center. Gardiner completed the personal trainer course through the American Council on Exercise in October, with a score of 536.

Community Social set for March 19

The Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians is once again hosting a Community Social. The next event is slated for Wednesday, March 19, from 5-8 p.m. at the Maliseet Community Center (568 Foxcroft Road).

Bring your regalia for Native drumming and dancing. Families are encouraged to attend. A meal will be provided and giveaways offered.

It is the goal of the Tribe to host these social events on a monthly basis, in order to increase interactions among tribal members.

Vendors are welcome to set up a table at no charge for this event. Contact Joseph Cyr, communications director, at jcyr@maliseets.com or by calling 207-532-4273 ext. 238 to reserve a spot!

“This certification will allow me to bring a new set of skills and guidance to the Fitness Center,” Gardiner said. “I am able to create fitness programs for those who would like to discuss their goals and expectations of having a personal program. I can also help in any way that is within the scope of practice of a personal trainer.”

Gardiner added that while advice for types of physical activity a person could perform to achieve their desired results are well within the purview of the new job, there is one area that cannot be addressed.

“I cannot give direct advice regarding diet and nutrition, but I can refer someone to websites that are helpful or a registered dietician that may be able to offer more help,” Gardiner said.

“I am planning on offering some type of fitness courses or group activities in 2025,” Gardiner continued. “I have yet to solidify a plan for anything specific. I have never done anything like that before, so I still need to figure out what I am most comfortable doing and find something I can do to the best of my ability.”

For more information on the Maliseet Fitness Center, call Gardiner at (207) 532-2240 or email fitness@maliseets.com.



Maliseet Nation Tribal Court



Pine Tree Legal Assistance Indigenous Department

Pine Tree Legal Assistance is dedicated to ensuring fairness, justice and equality for all.



Every last Tuesday of the Month



11 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Maliseet Nation Tribal Court 88 Bell Road, Littleton, ME

Pine Tree Legal's Priorities:

- ✓ Preservation of housing related needs
- ✓ Protecting income and economic stability
- ✓ Promoting safety, health and well-being
- ✓ Improving outcomes for children and youth
- ✓ Enforcing workplace rights for low-wage workers
- ✓ Addressing the legal needs of vulnerable populations

To schedule an appointment to meet with Pine Tree Legal, please call Court Clerk/ Administrator Tiffany Smith.

 (207) 532-4273 x 211