



Grand Conseil
de la Nation
WABAN-AKI



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

MAJOR CONFERENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT: CRUCIAL ISSUES FACING THE W8BANAKI NATION DISCUSSED

Ndakina, April 28, 2023 - A major conference of Indigenous experts and researchers was held today at the University of Vermont. For the occasion, several members of the Odanak First Nation were present, providing authentic representation and cultural participation, in addition to the 100+ members who attended virtually.

The conference focused on the principle of Indigenous sovereignty, the race-shifting phenomenon, and their academic response. Researchers and experts were able to present the current state of the situation and further explain how these phenomena are crucial considerations for Indigenous Peoples. Indeed, the elements discussed at this conference are major components of the recognition issue faced by the W8banaki Nation, particularly in the New England states.

THE ABENAKIS ARE THE SOLE GUARDIANS OF THEIR LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND TRADITIONS

In 2011, the State of Vermont officially recognized self-proclaimed Abenaki groups without regard to the genealogical evidence contradicting their claims. This unfounded recognition is causing a great deal of harm to the true Abenaki, as well as to the population of Vermont. The Abenaki Councils of Odanak and W8linak have joined forces to denounce this injustice and are currently conducting a mobilization campaign directed at their members residing in the United States and aimed at asserting their rights.

The Abenaki Councils of Odanak and W8linak consider it essential to set the record straight with the population and the authorities. To do so, meetings with elected officials from Vermont, Canada and Quebec are on the agenda, along with several other concerted actions that will gradually take place.

THE ABENAKIS OF TODAY ARE THE DIRECT DESCENDANTS OF THE ABENAKIS OF YESTERDAY. WE WERE NOT IN HIDING. WE ARE STILL HERE.

To learn more, please visit the new campaign website at <https://abenakiheritage.org/>, or email us at info@abenakiheritage.org with any questions.

About Abenaki Heritage

The Grand Conseil de la Nation Waban-Aki Inc. (GNCWA), founded in 1979, is the Tribal Council that brings together the Abenaki bands of Odanak and W8linak. From the eight objectives stated in the letters patent of the Waban-Aki Corporation Inc., the mandated committee has identified its mission's three main elements:

Representation, Development, and Administration. The political representatives of Odanak and W8liinak, supported by the GCNWA, are responsible for the ongoing mobilization campaign directed at its members residing in the United States.

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*Photo from left to right: **Jacques T. Watso**, councillor of the Abenaki Council of Odanak, **Brenda Macdougall**, Guest Speaker and Director of the Institute for Research and Studies at the University of Ottawa, University Research Chair in **Métis Family and Community Traditions**, and **Indigenous advisor to the president of the university**, **Chris Andersen**, Guest Speaker and Dean of the Faculty of Native Studies and Special Advisor to the Office of the Provost on Leadership and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Alberta and **Kim Tallbear**, Guest Speaker and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Peoples, Technoscience and Society at the University of Alberta.*

Source: Abenaki Heritage \ <https://abenakiheritage.org/>

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