

# WHO ARE THE WABANAKI?

**Wabanaki** means People of the Dawn. As the first people to greet the sunrise, they are said to be responsible for “holding up the sky” and are the first to see the sun when it rises.

The Wabanaki people are a group of five First Nations that are geographically located in the Eastern part of North America. The Wabanaki are united through an organization known as the Wabanaki Confederacy which is a traditional alliance formed to protect each other and an agreement of safe trade and travel. This cultural and spiritual bond grew from respecting one another as family.



## Five Nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy

Nation Name	Meaning
Mi'kmaq (L'nuk)	Family/Friends/My Brothers (the People)
Wolastoqey	People of the Beautiful, Bountiful River
Peskotomuhkatiyik	People of the Pollock
Penobscot	Place where the rocks open out (of the Penobscot River)
Abenaki	Dawn Land

The Confederacy formed between the mid and late 1600's in response to raids from the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy - specifically the Mohawks). The Confederacy fell dormant in the late 1800s after colonization displaced Indigenous governance systems. Survival became the primary focus for the Wabanaki, who faced foreign diseases and forced expulsion from their traditional lands and routes of travel. In 1993, the Penobscots, initiated a resurgence of collaboration around protecting Mother Earth and Aboriginal title. They lit the council fire and elected a Grand Chief. This fire has been burning ever since! (<https://nbcc.ca/indigenous/did-you-know/wabanaki-confederacy>)

**A DEEPER LOOK – check out these resources for more information:**

**News Articles**

- Wabanaki Confederacy: 'We're not dead, our fires are still burning strong' (APTN)
- Sacred fire lights the Wabanaki Confederacy (Indian Country Today)

**Websites**

- <https://www.wabanakicollection.com/>
- <https://www.cbu.ca/indigenous-affairs/mikmaq-resource-centre/the-mikmaq/>

