

11th Annual Rowland Foundation Conference
Land Acknowledgement by Kathleen Robbins
Oct 26, 2022

Good morning! It is my honor to welcome you to this gathering, on this piece of earth, on this hillside. What makes a place special at any given moment in time? It's the geology, the water, the flora, the fauna, the people, the energy, the intention. Take a moment to close your eyes and feel the specialness of *this* place, *this* time, *these* people.

Let us begin with gratitude. Gratitude to the glaciers who carved out these riverways and lake beds and left behind fertility, structure, and a deep foundation. Gratitude to the chlorophyll draining from the maple and birch leaves to leave behind brilliantly stunning colors that remind us that beauty is always present, even if below the surface.

We are grateful to these western winds blowing off this great lake, "the waters in-between", as they stir and freshen and bring in new energy. We are refreshed by each rain drop that slides down our cheeks and flows into the ground. We stand in amazement of each creature as they prepare for the long winter ahead, either mustering courage and strength for a long journey, or preparing to settle, soften, root down, and slow. We feel the energy of the new moon as it begins its slow but predictable voyage toward fullness.

We are grateful for YOU—learners, teachers, students, explorers—for gathering and *noticing*. For each action that you've taken today that re-establishes your connection with the earth—an observation, a wondering, a shift in behavior. Above all, we are most grateful for the traditional and contemporary caretakers of this land—the Winooskik band of the Abenaki, who lived and continue to live respectfully and in reciprocity with the soil, the trees, the winds and waters. Who were forcibly removed from their place and their purpose. Who were subjected to destruction of culture, lineage, and connection to place. Who remain among us as guides and stewards of N'dakina.

We call upon each and every one of you to recommit to noticing, to wondering, to stewardship, to rectifying wrongs. Please take a moment to think about, ponder, maybe identify, one small thing you can do to honor this place and the people it belongs to, by which I mean the Winooskik band of the Abenaki.

Let's take a step forward, together.