

**NARRAGANSETT TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (NITHPO)  
NORTH ATLANTIC COAST COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT (NAC-CESU)  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**NITHPO, ITS ROLE IN THE NARRAGANSETT INDIAN TRIBE, AND ITS MISSION AND PRIMARY FOCUS OF COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES WITHIN NAC-CESU**

The Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office (NITHPO) is a designated political subdivision of the Narragansett Indian Tribe and is charged by Narragansett Tribal resolution to address issues of Tribal historic preservation. Acknowledged as “*Narragansett Countrye*” during the Colonial era, the Narragansett Indian Tribe has been federally recognized as a Sovereign Nation since 1983 with administrative offices located in Charlestown, Rhode Island. Our ancestral lineage dates to the aboriginal people of the region that is now known as Rhode Island. Our knowledge and tradition has been passed through generations of ceremony, stories and song. NITHPO is authorized to determine all matters on behalf of the Tribe with respect to historic preservation, Indian graves’ protection, and religious freedom and other relevant cultural matters. Our mission is to protect our ancestors' memories, histories, and living places. Our respect, duty, and obligations to our ancestors will forever exist and remain in the minds of us all. We believe NITHPO’s mission to protect our Tribal heritage and cultural resources would fit well within and contribute to NAC-CESU’s mission to devise management strategies for preserving cultural resources and maritime heritage, and would be the primary focus of our collaborative activities within the NAC-CESU.

**NITHPO PROGRAMS AND ROLE IN FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AND AGENCY RESEARCH**

**US Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)**

NITHPO, and its research partner, the University of Rhode Island’s Graduate School of Oceanography (URI-GSO), recently entered into a cooperative agreement with BOEM to conduct a major four-year study entitled, “*Developing Protocols for Reconstructing Submerged Paleocultural Landscapes and Identifying Ancient Native American Archaeological Sites in Submerged Environments.*” NITHPO is actively participating in the design, implementation, and analysis of results from detailed field investigations of four offshore areas in the waters of southern New England to test best practices methodologies for reconstructing submerged paleolandscapes and developing, testing and refining modeling approaches for predicting the locations of ancient Tribal submerged cultural resources. Results from this study will assist BOEM, individual States, and Tribal communities develop appropriate information-gathering protocols and survey measures to avoid or mitigate adverse effects to submerged ancient Tribal cultural resources during Atlantic Continental Shelf development.

## **National Park Service (NPS) Nipsachuck Battlefield Mapping Program**

NITHPO is currently concluding its second year partnership with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) in a NPS Battlefield Mapping Grant in search of two King Philip's War battle sites (i.e., the 1675 battle and 1676 massacre sites of Tribal People) in the Nipsachuck Swamp area of North Smithfield, RI. In year one of the NPS project, the six Tribes (Mohegan, Pequot, Nipmuck, Mashpee Wampanoag, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head – Aquinnah, and the Narragansett), whose ancestors engaged with Colonial Militias on both sides of those events more than 300 years ago, the RIHPHC and historical researchers met seven times to share oral histories, be briefed on the battle- and land-evidence research findings, examine archaeological metal detection assessment sites and offer opinions regarding the validity of the evolving findings. NITHPO has continued to play an integral role in the 2013 field and ethnohistorical research presently underway.

### **NITHPO KEY PERSONNEL**

#### **John B. Brown, III, Narragansett Tribal Medicine Man and Historic Preservation Officer**

As the founder and principal officer of the NITHPO, Mr. Brown has 32 years of experience in the active leadership and direction of the protection of all manner of Tribal cultural resources, including ancestral burials. His breadth of knowledge and command of federal historic preservation law has allowed him to build NITHPO into a national leader in innovative forms of Tribal historic preservation. After nearly two decades of service as understudy to the Narragansett Indian Tribe's Elder Medicine Man, the full responsibilities of the Tribal Medicine Man were transferred to Mr. Brown upon the Elder Medicine Man's retirement in 2012. In his role as the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Narragansett Indian Tribe, Mr. Brown's vision for the NITHPO's engagement of federal agencies and the scientific community as a partner in on-going marine spatial planning research initiatives associated primarily with offshore alternative energy development has created new and unique opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. These efforts have benefitted the submerged cultural resource management process, by actualizing NITHPO's mission to ensure the protection of ancient Tribal cultural resources.

#### **Doug Harris, Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Preservationist for Ceremonial Landscapes**

Mr. Harris has 21 years of training and service to the cultural resource preservation mission of the NITHPO. He specializes in Narragansett Tribal history, oral history, and regional Tribal histories, as well as ceremonial landscapes preservation. Mr. Harris has been responsible for bringing to the fore federal agency responsibilities for identification of submerged ancient Tribal cultural resources under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and has been an active participant in marine archaeological investigations performed for compliance purposes. Mr. Harris serves as the Narragansett Tribal representative member of the Northeast

Regional Ocean Council (NROC) and is co-Principal Investigator on a major four-year study being conducted for BOEM involving the development of protocols for reconstructing submerged paleocultural landscapes and identifying submerged ancient Native American *cultural resources*.

### **Lloyd “Running Wolf” Wilcox, Elder Medicine Man**

Elder keeper of medicine tradition of the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

### **Dr. Ella Sekatau, Elder Medicine Woman/Ethnohistorian**

Elder keeper of the history, oral history, and ethnobotanical history of the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

### **Field Specialists**

NITHPO has a talented staff of young Tribal representatives committed to the preservation of Tribal heritage resources both on land and underwater who represent the next generation of Tribal historic preservation leadership. This staff includes:

- **John Brown, IV**
- **Muckquashim Hopkins**
- **Chali Machado**
- **Ginew Benton**
- **Norman Gonzales**

## **NITHPO FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

### **Narragansett Indian Tribal Longhouse (Charlestown, RI)**

- Ceremonial Meeting Place
- Tribal & Public Outreach/Education Meeting Space
- Research Library and Archives
- GIS Mapping & Analysis Laboratory
- Audio-Visual Media Laboratory and Oral History/Tribal Event Video Archive/Duplication Service
- NITHPO Field Staff/Dive Team Operations Center

### **Equipment**

Diving Equipment (for 5 scientific divers)

Digital Video Production and Editing Equipment  
 GPS Equipment  
 GIS Software  
 Computer Workstations

## **PAST NITHPO RESEARCH**

### **Ceremonial Stone Landscape Mapping**

For the past seven years, in collaboration with the member Tribes of the (USET) United South and Eastern Tribes and the regional Tribes of southern New England, NITHPO has pioneered historic preservation procedures and protocols for the identification and protection of ancestral ceremonial stone landscapes. USET Resolution #2003-022 informed federal agencies and the public regarding ceremonial stone landscapes, “...for thousands of years before the immigration of the Europeans, the pau waus or medicine people of today’s New England region used this sacred landscape to sustain the people’s reliance on Mother Earth and the spirit energies of balance and harmony...”. In December of 2008, the National Register of Historic Places acknowledged its first ceremonial stone landscape located west of the Mississippi River, at the Turners Falls Sacred Ceremonial Hill Site on the lands of the Turners Fall Municipal Airport in Montague, MA. In the years following that event, the FCC and USACE-NED have required ceremonial stone landscape surveys as components of permitted undertakings where consortia of Federally Recognized Tribes have requested identification and mapping of ceremonial stone landscapes pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Less than a decade ago, these ceremonial stone landscapes were being destroyed as a result of archaeological misidentification as mere stones piled up during Colonial farm clearing. Since that first USET resolution, three others have been issued to enlist federal agencies to implement federal TCP guidelines of protection, and to enlist towns, land holders, agencies, developers and scientists as active stewards of ceremonial stone landscape protection. In less than a decade, hundreds of these monuments to Tribal ancestral beliefs regarding balance and harmony with our Mother, the Earth, have now been saved from the bulldozers’ blades in Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont. Slowly, Tribal procedures of identification, avoidance and protection are making their way into the standard tool kit of the field archaeologists and into the land management decisions of agencies, states and project proponents they service.

## **CURRENT FORMAL AGREEMENTS AND INFORMAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES**

### **Formal Agreements**

US Army Corps of Engineers – New England District (USACE-NED) – consultation on all projects permitted by the USACE-NED throughout New England (primarily on utility projects)

Federal Highway Administration (FHA) – consultation on all RI Department of Transportation projects where identification and protection of Tribal cultural resources is warranted

US Navy (USN) – consultation related to Tribal commercial fishing rights in USN’s offshore “safe zones”

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) – consultation for ongoing projects at T. F. Green Airport (Warwick, RI) and Turner Falls Municipal Airport (Montague, MA) are by agreement with FAA and local airport commissions

### **Informal Agreements**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – collaboration regarding protection of Tribal sites in the coastal zone

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) – Middle Connecticut River dam relicensing participation in Tribal consultations

### **NITHPO TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVE**

Name: Doug Harris

Title: Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer/Preservationist for Ceremonial Landscapes

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### **LETTER OF SUPPORT**

Jennifer Ewald, BOEM Oceanographer and CESU National Council Member (attached)