



Sustaining basketmaking in Waponahkik through increased accessibility, processing, and storage opportunities



Dr. John Daigle

Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative Conference

Burlington, Vermont

November 20, 2025

WAPONAHKIK

Wabanaki Homelands

■ Contemporary Wabanaki Villages, Reservations & Reserves

Mi'kmaq homelands in Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland) not shown



This map is one representation of Wapona Territory names and all Wabanaki knowledge of place shared in this map is the intellectual and cultural property of Wabanaki Nations.

Cultural significance of brown ash

Brown ash is known in Wabanaki languages as wikp (Peskotomuhkati-Wolastoqey), wíkəpi (Penobscot), or wisqoq (Mi'kmaq). In most translations, these words mean “basket tree” as this tree is used for basket making. Brown ash is interwoven with Wabanaki community identity and spirituality.



Gabriel Frey
Pack Baskets



Baskets by Eric Otter Bacon

Early collaboration for ash protection



Richard Silliboy basket

- Brown Ash Task Force formed in the 90s
- Early University symposiums (2009-2014) “Protecting the Ash for Future Generations: KolunkayowanWikpiyik” brought together Federal, State, and Tribal partnerships
- These meetings identified outreach, seed collection, and preserving basketmaking as top priorities



Photo by Jennifer Neptune





Photo by Abby Ratcliff

...Enter Emerald Ash Borer

- EAB
- *Agrilus planipennis*
- Buprestidae
- First detected: Michigan, US 2002



Reported spread of emerald ash borer in North America (2019)

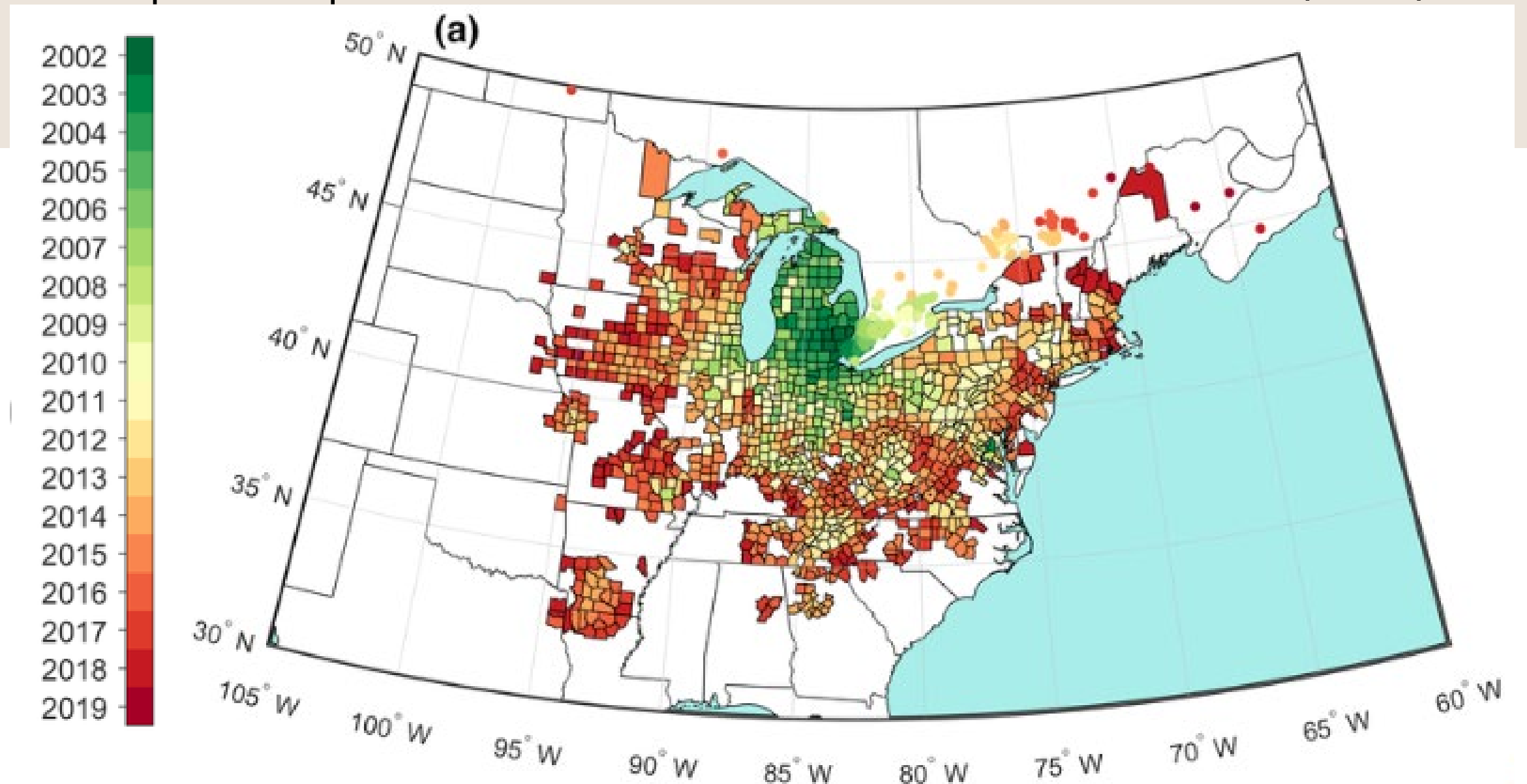


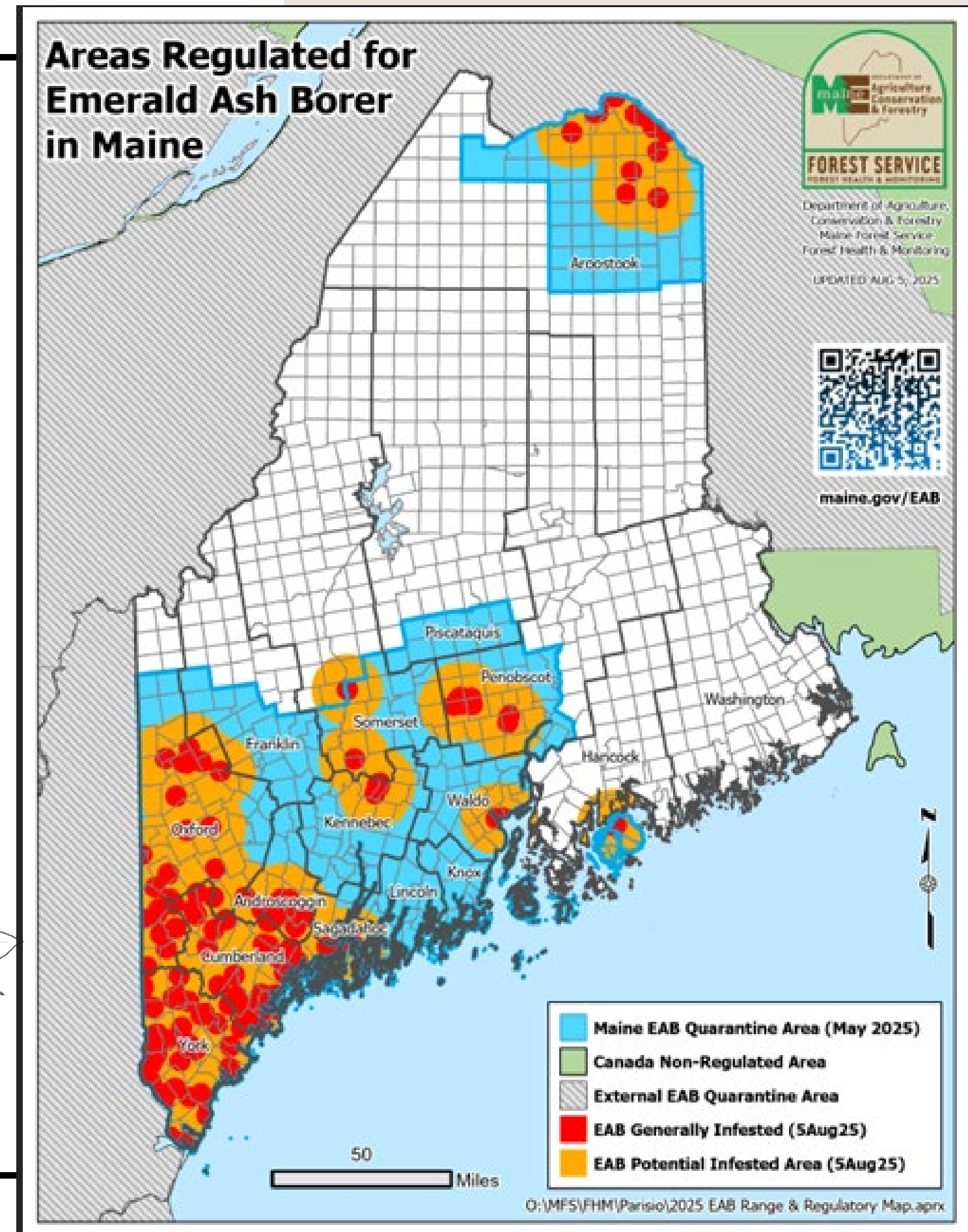
Figure from Webb et al. 2021

Quarantine in effect

- Federal quarantine ended in January 2021 in the US
- EAB was first detected in Maine in 2018
- State quarantine is in effect (by county)

What that means for basket making

- Issues in access and movement of materials

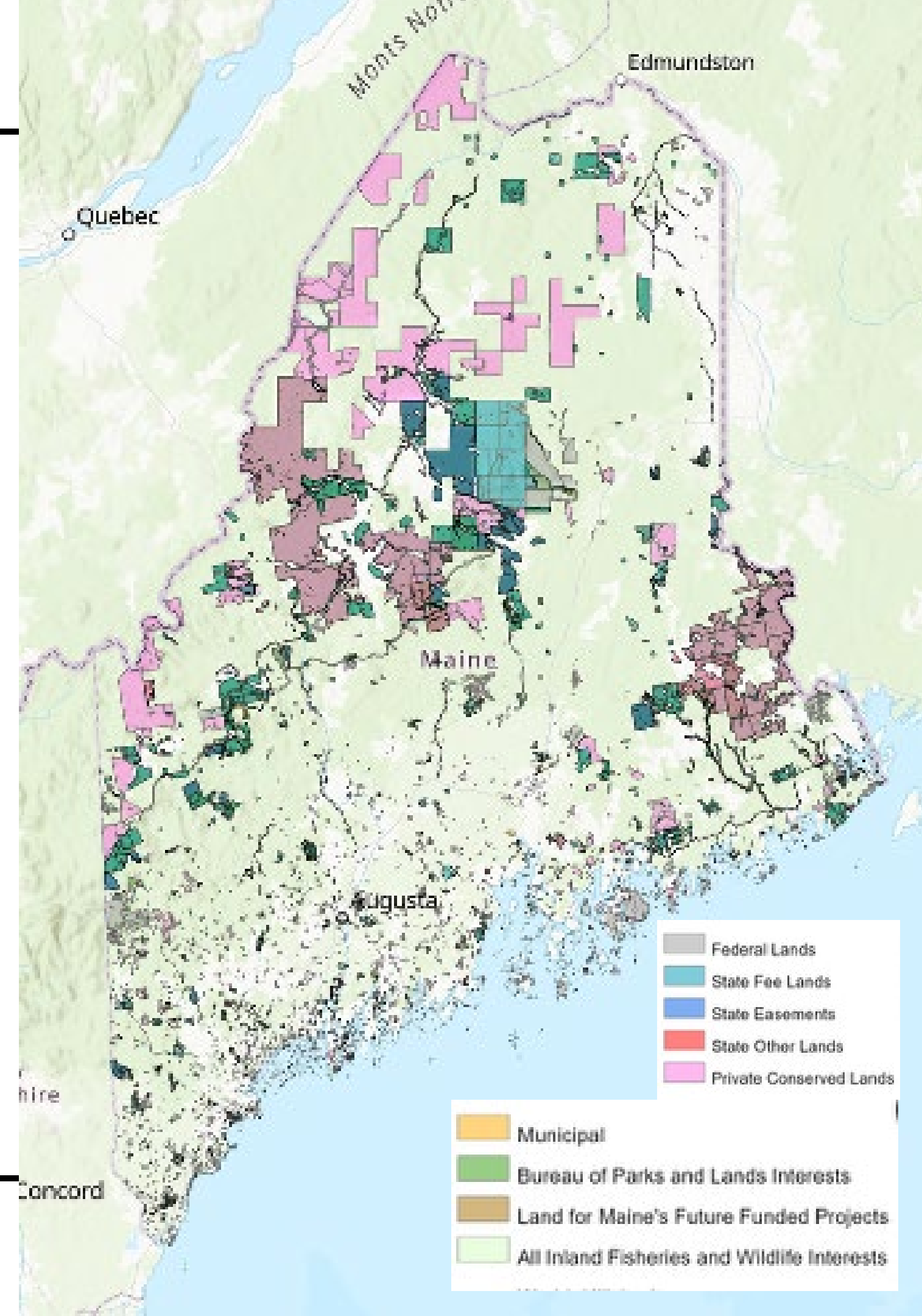


Who owns Maine's ash stands?

- 94% of Maine is privately owned
- 23% is conserved land (4% federal or state)
 - 1% Tribal Nations

The following Federally recognized Tribal Nations own in fee or trust the remaining 1.06% of Maine's lands (Sanborn et al. 2022):

- Passamaquoddy Tribe
- Penobscot Nation
- Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
- Mi'kmaq Nation



2022: US Forest Service Funding founded APCAW



Based out of University of Maine, Orono, APCAW is a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and forest caretakers working together to organize actions to protect ash.



Dr. John Daigle

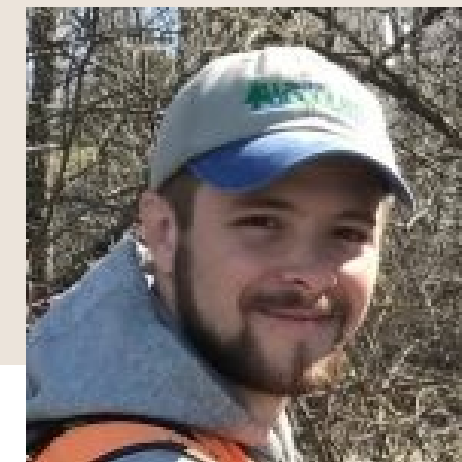


Dr. Darren Ranco

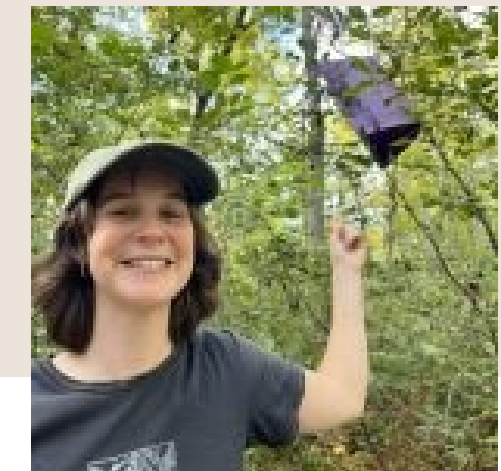


Dr. Parina Zarahimzadeh-Bajgirani

Graduate Students:



Tyler Everett



Ella McDonald

Postdoctoral Researchers:



Dr. Lauren Gonzalez



Dr. Ryan Naylor



Zoe Albion



Ashlynn Amick

Partners



+Private landowners

+27 Land Trusts

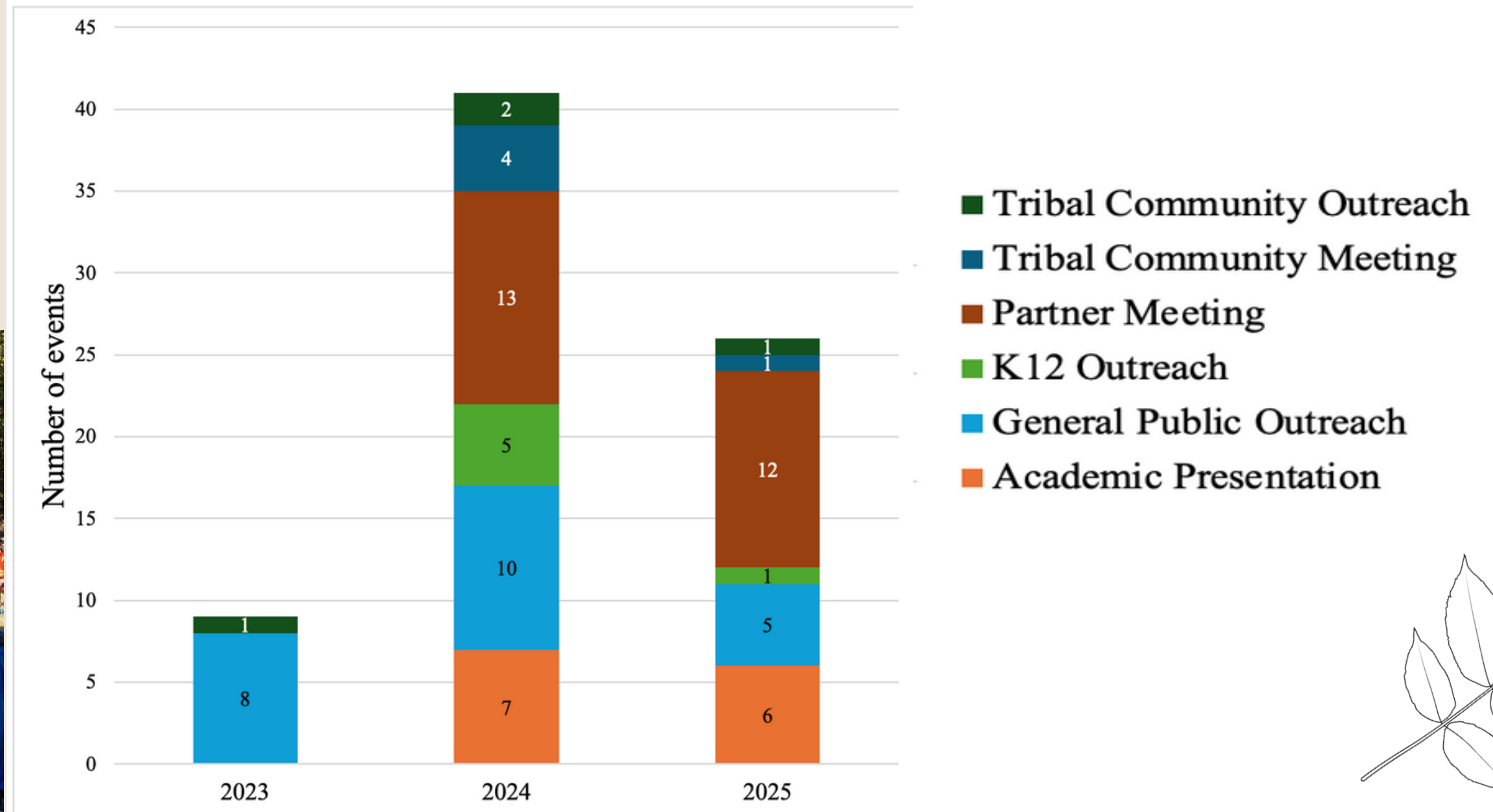
Photo by: Aimee Good



APCAW's Programs

Highlights:

- Cultural Importance of Brown Ash Panel
- Ash Inventory Trainings
- Ash Seed Collection Trainings
- MaMA Lingerin Ash Training



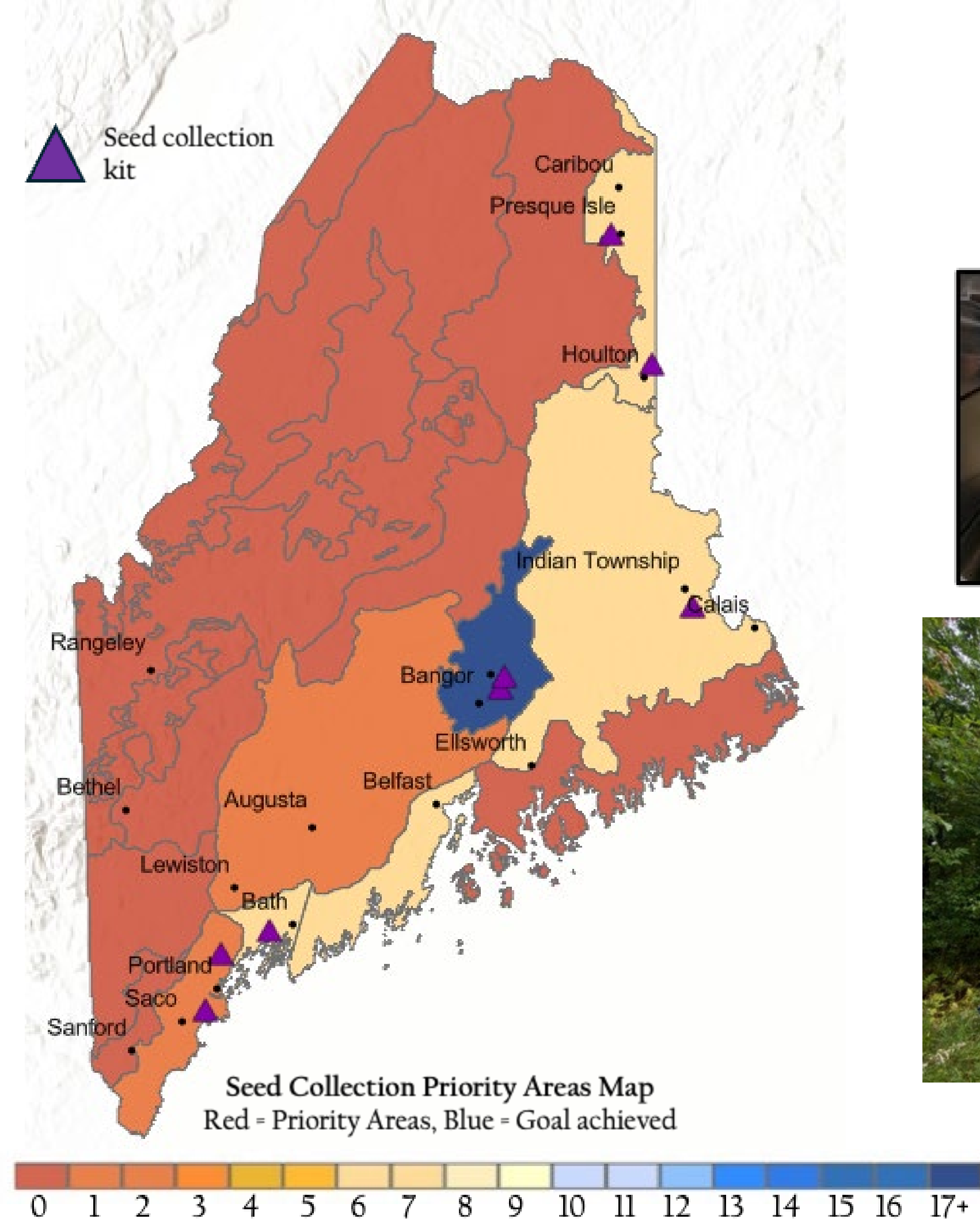
A man in a dark jacket and orange vest is working on a tree trunk in a forest. Other people are visible in the background.

Tyler Everett
Mi'kmaq

Inventory, Ash Resilience, & Seed Collection Speakers



Seed Collection



Brown Ash Seed Collection Manual:
Preserving Brown Ash (*Fraxinus nigra*, wikip/wiskoq) through the Ash Protection Collaboration Across Wabanakik, APCAW



Accessible on: <https://umaine.edu/apcaw/>

Ash Protection Strategies: Inventory & Monitoring



Protecting Ash for the Future: A Preservation Focused Inventory Project

What is the health status of ash across the region? How can we preserve ash into the future?



Protecting Ash for the Future:

https://investigate.gmri.org/project/protecting_ash

Introduction & Cultural Importance Speakers



Richard Silliboy
Mi'kmaq



Dr. John Daigle
Penobscot



Dr. Suzanne Greenlaw
Maliseet



Gabriel Frey
Passamaquoddy



Jennifer Neptune
Penobscot

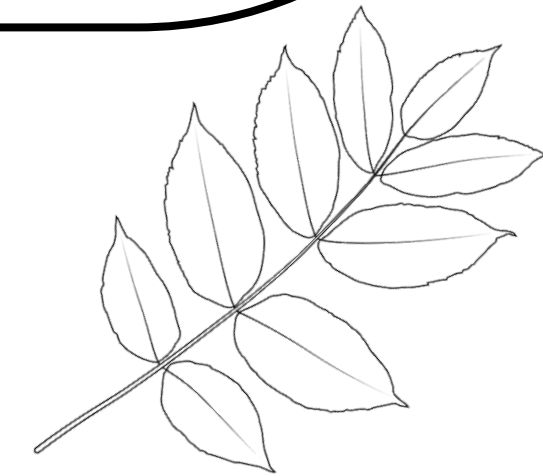


Tyler Everett
Mi'kmaq

Learning from multiple cultural perspectives enhanced the programs

"There was a webinar where a basket maker was talking about how the sounds of pounding ash are distinct from person to person... **I was just struck by how the potential loss of ash, as an ecologist, is compounded by the potential loss of all that cultural richness and that sense of community that's around the use of ash, and that was totally new to me from the APCAW webinar series. And that made an impact on my heart.** Because I mean, I love trees, but I don't have that... I haven't had that kind of community relationship with them myself."

Non-native Conservation Staff Member



Collaboration contributes to higher levels of action

	n	Did a stewardship activity*	Did not do a stewardship activity*
Collaborated with others	124	105 (84.7%)	19 (15.3%)
Did not collaborate with others	136	54 (39.7%)	82 (60.3%)



*“Stewardship activity” includes doing one or more of the following activities: Monitoring for EAB, ash inventory, offering access to Wabanaki harvesters, collecting ash seeds, organizing an event to raise awareness about ash protection, manage ash forests in any way, or grow ash from seed. 161 respondents did 1 or more stewardship activity, 128 did none.

Current & Future Work:

Strategies to sustain Wabanaki
basketmaking despite EAB

2025 Indigenous Forest Knowledge
Fund

1. Increasing brown ash cultural harvest opportunities on private land
2. Create a mobile pounder machine and make it easily available to Wabanaki brown ash harvesters
3. Planning process for brown ash splint material storage with Tribal Nations



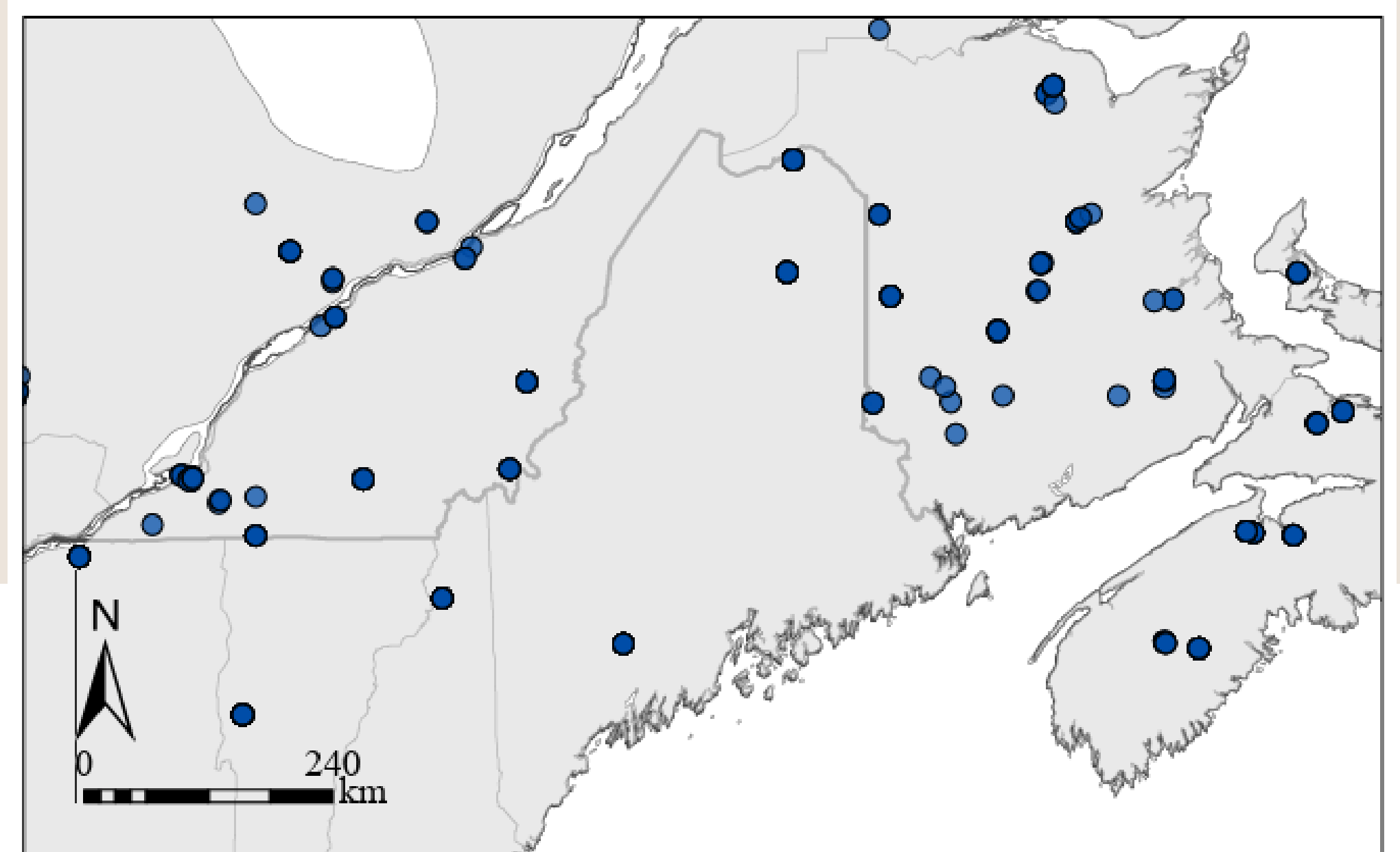
Current & Future Work:

Identification of brown ash genetic diversity across our region

- Protocol developed by Dr. Jill Hamilton's lab (Penn State)
- Collaboration with Nathalie Isabel and Natural Resources Canada
- Results can help guide seed collection



Collections made thus far:



Questions? Want to collaborate?

APCAW's website:



Contact us!

apcaw-group@maine.edu

My email:

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