

NITHPO

Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office

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WHY SHOULD LOKER BE RESPECTED AND PROTECTED?

CEREMONIAL STONE LANDSCAPES: In October of 2002, the 24 member Tribes who, from Maine to Texas, made up the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) publicly detailed the core of Eastern Tribal spiritual belief as stated in USET Resolution 2003:022 - "for thousands of years before the immigration of the Europeans, the pau waus or medicine people of today's New England region used [these] sacred landscape[s] to sustain the peoples' reliance on Mother Earth and the spirit energies of balance and harmony". The Loker site is one such place where Tribal ancestors sustained "the peoples' reliance of Mother Earth and the spirit energies of balance and harmony". Our ancients believed that we humans and all plants, animals, beings with wings and fins, and all manner of insects and crawling beings were Earthlings/siblings – with all of us related through Ohke, our Mother/the Earth and our Creator Father.

When circumstances were out of balance or without harmony between Ohke's children, prayer stones were used in different forms to "pray" to our Mother calling for a re-balancing and re-harmonizing of our relationship to all our other relations on Mother Earth's body. (Example: If an animal or another human attacked and killed a person, members of the village upon discovering the remains would bury that person in the clan burying ground. Later, they might discover that where the person was killed, the spirit energy in that place remained terribly disturbed. At that place out of balance things were found to occur. A local medicine person might be asked to go to that place and speak a Tribal prayer to Ohke for re-balancing. The Medicine person would choose a stone, speak words into it asking Ohke to re-balance and re-harmonize the area of the tragedy. Depending on whether only the Earth Mother's influence was needed or whether the influence of one of Ohke's celestial relatives may also be needed – this may determine whether a group/Manitou hassannash or some other configuration of prayer stones was required. From this concept and belief comes the placement of the ceremonial groupings of stones at places like Loker.

NOT CAIRNS: These ceremonial stone groupings are not called cairns, as they might be referred to in Celtic countries like Scotland or Ireland. Before colonization, Wayland was a part of the Massachusetts Indian Tribal territory, what anthropologists call an Algonquin dialect was spoken and in a "sibling" Tribal dialect, Narragansett, one way to refer to these stones would have been as [spiritual or ceremonial stones or groupings] or *Manitou Hassunnash*. **MANITOU**

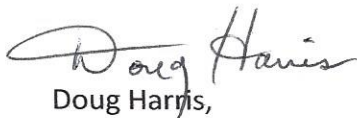
is a word for *spirit*, **HASSUN** is a word for *stone* and **HASSUNNASH** is a word for *many or a group of stones*. What you have at Loker is a form of **MANITOU HASSUNNASH**.

DOW CHEMICAL CLEAN-UP: Yes, Dow Chemical in the making of a key ingredient of Vietnam War's agent orange altered the integrity and purity of all that our Mother the Earth had allowed to flourish there at the place we all call LOKER. For whatever their ancient prayer purpose was, the Manitou Hassunnash survived in place and continue to resonate those ancient Ancestral prayer ceremonies for balance and harmony - even today. It is only by disturbing or removing the stones that the ancient prayers are silenced and cease the balancing communication with **Ohke**, our Mother, the Earth.

SOCCER FIELD CONSTRUCTION: Unlike a tape recorder, today, we may not know how to "playback" the prayers that were spoken into the "Loker stones". It is my belief that disturbing the stones to construct a playground or soccer field would stir up the out of balance, out of harmony spirit energy that was quieted by the original placement of the ceremonial stones at Loker. This, we might call releasing "bad medicine". Building a playground or soccer field amidst "bad medicine" is unwise. We request that Wayland respect and protect the stones at Loker. Allow their ancient prayer work with **Ohke** to continue. If you must build, design to avoid impacts to the ceremonial stones. An avoidance survey was previously conducted at Loker in 2013 and approved by the Tribal Historic Preservation Offices of the federally recognized Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), Mashantucket Pequot, Mohegan and Narragansett Tribes. This year changes were made in the construction footprint and a new avoidance plan needs to be rendered. In 2013 as a component of the four Tribe Memorandum of Understanding with Wayland, our Tribes, pursuant to the authority of 36 CFR 800.4(c)(1) of the National Historic Preservation Act, identified and assessed that stone features at Loker were of religious and cultural significance to our Tribes. Since the area of potential effect for this project has been expanded, an updated survey and avoidance plan is essential to avoid inadvertent impacts to un-surveyed features of ancient religious and cultural significance.

Mothers, Fathers, Children, Citizens and Leaders of Wayland your Tribal neighbors near and far ask you to honor the ancient ones whose Spirit prayers still sustain balance and harmony in the place you now call Wayland, and whose ceremonies still resonate in this landscape that to you is home. Respect the ceremonial places of the past and cautiously nurture balance and harmony in the present and in the future. Wisely consider your options at Loker.

Tau botdan tamock wutche wame (We are giving thanks for all things.)



Doug Harris,

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Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office