

*Board of Selectmen*  
**Town of Montague**

1 Avenue A (413) 863-3200 xt. 110  
Turners Falls, MA 01376 FAX: (413) 863-3231

February 6, 2013

Mr. Robert Quiggle, RPA  
HDR Engineering Inc.  
1304 Buckley Road  
Suite 202  
Syracuse, NY 13212-4311

Hello Robert:

We met at the FERC Relicensing Hearing in Turners Falls last week. I promised that I would send you a copy of the National Register Eligibility Notification for the Turners Falls Ceremonial Site and my concept paper for the Great Falls Native Cultural Park.

The Town of Montague is particularly interested in having this information seriously considered during the relicensing process. This would include the importance of providing access to the area immediately below the Turners Falls dam, with the area developed as a native cultural park. Other possible areas of interest are the Cabot Woods area which has potential for development of interpretive and educational features.

I would appreciate hearing your feedback with respect to the potential for incorporating our plans into the licensing process.

Frank Abbondanzio  
Town Administrator

**CONCEPTUAL PLAN  
FOR THE  
GREAT FALLS NATIVE CULTURAL PARK**

**A DRAFT PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A  
HERITAGE/CULTURAL TOURISM PROGRAM IN THE  
TURNERS FALLS AREA**

**SUBMITTED JOINTLY BY THE TOWN OF MONTAGUE  
AND  
THE NARRAGANSETT TRIBE AND THE WAMPANOAG TRIBE OF  
GAY HEAD (AQUINNAH)**

**OCTOBER, 2009**

**For review only: Subject to Final Approval by the Board of Selectmen and  
Tribal Elders**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction and Background

- The Reconciliation event – held on May 19, 2004 to commemorate the massacre at Turners Falls established a process by which the Town and the participating Native American tribes agreed to acknowledge the tragic events that had taken place on May 19, 1676 and to begin a process of spiritual healing and reconciliation.
- In the Reconciliation agreement, the Board of Selectmen and tribes “committed to a future that will continue the exchange of actions to promote understanding about and between the cultures, increase mutual vigilance for historic preservation and deepen our appreciation for the rich heritage of indigenous peoples of our region and all who have found respite, sanctuary and welcome here.”
- The so-called “bury the hatchet” ceremony and the continuing joint effort between the two tribes and the town to preserve the ceremonial landscape at the Turners Falls airport is an excellent example of how tribes and towns can work together to achieve common goals while respecting each others individual objectives.
- Over the past two years, in tribal dialogues with various divisions of the National Park Service, representatives of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and the Narragansett Indian Tribe have begun exploring a concept of “Preservation Tourism” as it might apply in the Turners Falls/Montague region. As envisioned by the tribes:

“Tourism that has multiple Preservation initiatives at its core may be uniquely suited to initiate and sustain a program of economic development based on a variety of preservation grants, scholarly conferences, and the planning of a network of theme tour trails and destinations. Themes that examine regional natural resources and interpretive geology; Tribal history and culture; the history of Indian/European interactions; and the region’s industrial history would serve at the foundation for a tourism program that informs as well as teaches the values of resource protection. Tourism marketing would be geared toward a local, regional, national and international clientele. Planning, funding and constructing the necessary conference, media, housing and transportation infrastructure is the broad foundation for this town/tribe economic development venture.”

- In September, 2008, a member of the Montague Board of Selectmen attended the USET Conference in Nashville Tennessee, and participated in a joint panel with tribal representatives, which included a discussion of potential opportunities for preservation tourism in the Turners Falls/Montague region. The participants concluded that the town and tribes share a significant mutual interest in promoting the region’s native culture in a program of heritage and cultural (preservation) tourism.
- In December, 2008, the National Park Service, in its finding that the ceremonial stones site (Turners Falls Airport) is eligible for listing on the National Historic Register, also

concluded that it made sense to incorporate that site into a much larger area encompassing existing National Register and National Register eligible sites in and around Turners Falls (see attached) including the Riverside Archeological District, Wissatinnewag, Hanneman site, Ceremonial Stones Site, as well as other sites located on East and West Mineral Hill and Wills Hill, portions of the Montague Plains and along the banks of the Connecticut River. This larger site, referred to as the “Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District”, would then be nominated for inclusion on the National Register.

- Representatives of the Town and the Narragansett and Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) have continued to meet throughout the summer and fall of 2009 and worked to develop a concept for the heritage/cultural tourism program.
- In October 2009, a final concept for this proposed plan will be presented at the USET Conference for an endorsement by the twenty six Eastern member tribes.

## Importance to the Nation and Region

- The development of a cultural/heritage tourism program that seeks to encourage greater understanding and awareness of the Native American history and culture, specific to the Eastern tribes that inhabited our region for more than 12,000 years, will help to fill a major void that currently exists in our National educational curriculum.
- Few people are aware of the rich Native American heritage that is present here in Southern New England, and more specifically in the Connecticut River valley, a history and culture that is very different from that typically represented in a history of western Indian tribes, which itself is so often portrayed in stereotypical fashion.
- A cultural/heritage tourist destination in the Turners Falls area is considered appropriate and realistic given the wealth of heritage resources, representing both Native and Colonial (Deerfield) history, available in the region, which could be used in interpretative programming.
- The National Park Service has described the proposed “Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District” – recommended for inclusion on the National Historic Register – as a “large, connected cultural landscape that includes related historic sites, traditional cultural places and archeological sites.” This area contains evidence of more than 12,000 years of continuous habitation by Native Americans – a continuum extending from the period following the retreat of the great North American glacier to the King Philip’s War (1676-77).
- The Turners Falls area was also the location of key battles of the King Philip’s War (1676-77), and the massacre at Turners Falls, considered a turning point in the war.
- Old Deerfield and Northfield, located with a ten mile radius of Turners Falls, were also key sites.
- King Philip’s War has been referred to as America’s forgotten war, and with it the many important lessons that could be learned from it. Also forgotten is the rich Native

American culture that had flourished in Southern New England region for more than 12,000 years, but suddenly disappeared following the King Philip's War. As Schultz and Tougias (1999) have point out

"Among the handful of seminal events that shaped our mind and continent, King Philip's War is perhaps the least studied and most forgotten. In essence, the war cleared Southern New England's native population from the land, and with it a way of life that evolved over a millennium. The Wampanoag, Narragansett, Nipmuc and other native populations were slaughtered, sold into slavery, or placed in widely scattered communities throughout New England after the war. In its aftermath, the English established themselves as the dominant peoples, - allowing the uninterrupted growth of England's northern colonies right up to the American Revolution." As important, the authors conclude: "King Philip's War became the brutal model for how the U.S. would deal with its native population. Later names like Tippicanoe, Black Hawk's War, the Trail of Tears, the Salt Creek Massacre, the Red River War, and Wounded Knee all took place under the long, violent shadow of King Philip's War" The authors conclude that In removing King Philip's War from our history books, we became according to the rubric, destined to repeat it. And that we did with a vengeance."

- From the national standpoint, the King Philip's War is also important because of its relevance to our current understanding of conflict and conflict resolution. Between 1620 (the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth) and 1676 (the eve of hostilities), Native Americans and Colonists lived in relative harmony throughout extremely provocative times, in what Russell Bourne (1990) referred to as "bi-racial society". For nearly fifty years, they lived by a simple treaty, where both parties pledged that they would not "doe hurte" unto the other.
- Shultze and Tougias (1999) also point to the obvious irony that exists between the generally accepted image of our early relations with Native Americans at Plymouth Colony and the reality that existed just a half century later, following the cessation of the hostilities associated with the King Philip's War.

"It seems particularly ironic, then, that Massasoit is seated prominently in our romanticized view of the first Thanksgiving, while the most graphic image of (King) Philip (also called Metacom) – the son of Massasoit – is (Philip's) skewered head on the end of a pike and placed along a major Plymouth thoroughfare for most of a generation."

The authors conclude: "The real tragedy is how we came to embrace one image and lost the other."

## **Concept and Plan of the Native Cultural Landscape Park**

- The proposed heritage/cultural tourism program will be focused on the creation of a "Native Cultural Landscape Park", the boundaries of which correspond roughly to the

“Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District” that the National Park Service has determined is eligible for inclusion on the National Historic Register of Place

- The primary goals of the Cultural Park will be:
  - (1) **Preservation of Native Cultural sites** in that are currently listed or eligible for listing on the National Historic Register including the Riverside Archeological District, the Hanneman Site, the ceremonial stone site and other sites of related importance;
  - (2) Enhancement of the public’s understanding and awareness of the area’s rich Native American culture, particularly that of the tribes which inhabited Southern New England and this area for more than 12,000 years, through **Interpretive Exhibits, Programs and Activities**;
  - (3) Stimulation of economic development through a Program of **Heritage/Cultural Tourism**, which centers on the creative economy and ecotourism.
- Preservation objectives will be achieved both through formal listing of the Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District on the National Register and through efforts to increase the public’s awareness of the importance of Native Cultural resources through educational exhibits and programs offered in the park.
- Interpretive Exhibits, Programs and Activities will be provided at a central Visitors Center, at the Great Falls Discovery Center, at Replica Native Villages, and at other sites, including the ceremonial stones site.
- The main Visitors Center will be located at the Cumberland Farms site, initially in the existing building, renovated for this purpose. As funding becomes available, a new, more architecturally suitable facility would be constructed on the site.
- The Visitors Center would include three types of exhibits:
  - (1) A primary exhibit featuring the 12,000 year chronology of Native American history and culture in the region, from Paleoindian through the outbreak of the King Philip’s War in 1676. This exhibit would be centered on the Connecticut River (and its fertile floodplain) as a source of sustenance, transportation, commerce, communication and spiritual fulfillment. This story will also be supplemented by guided tours to Replica Native American villages, at yet to be determined sites.
  - (2) A special effort will be made to interpret the significance of the King Philip’s War, both to the future of Native Americans in this region, following their defeat in 1677 and to the development of attitudes and prejudices towards Native Americans that carried forward into subsequent generations and became institutionalized in U.S. policy.

(3) An exhibit recognizing the Reconciliation Ceremony/ Signing of an Agreement between the town and the tribes in May 2004 will be featured. This will include video, photographic and other documents along with an interpretation of their significance.

- Working in cooperation with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, a small exhibit will be developed at the Great Falls Discovery Center which will focus on the presence of ecological principles and sustainability in the way Native Americans used the Connecticut River and the watershed.
- The Great Hall of the Discovery Center will also be the location of classes and workshops, presentations and temporary exhibits relating to Native American history and culture. These could include a wide range of scholarly and other topics including: events of the King Philip's War, Oral history and genealogy, Native American Arts and Crafts, Native Music, Food and Cuisine etc.
- The project will work with Northeast Utilities on the development of an exhibit at the Fish Viewing facility which describes and illustrates what the falls area was like prior to the construction of the dams when Native Americans fished for shad and salmon.
- Replica Native American villages will be constructed at yet to determined, satellite locations that will be selected because of their historical significance. Possible locations include Wissatinnewag (fishing station), riverfront site at Cabot Woods near Rock Dam, and Smead Island. These villages would interpret Native American life, and would include tribal customs, language, ceremony, ritual, building technique indigenous to the region, social life, farming techniques, fishing and hunting, etc.
- Interpretive signage would be installed at selected sites along the river front and canal describing and illustrating significant historical events. These could include events associated with the King Philip's War and the Turners Falls massacre. A site located on the island between the canal and river may be developed as a burial site for Indian remains that are returned to the area.
- A site along the Connecticut River would also be used, with the permission of Northeast Utilities, for the annual pow wows and Inter-tribal and public canoe competition.
- Guided Native canoe tours above and below the falls would also be offered. These could include visits to islands used by Native Americans in early history (Smead) and others known for Eagle habitat.

## Implementation Plan

- Due to the size, scope and complexity of this concept, and the likely funding requirements, it is recognized that its implementation will require several years to implement.
- It is assumed that the plan will be implemented in at least three phases, over a five to ten year period.
- **Phase One:** Years One - Three. This phase will focus on
  - (1) Developing the organization and management capacity, necessary to implement this project. An effort will be made to build upon the existing institutions and capacity developed in conjunction with the Discovery Center and River Culture Program.
  - (2) Achieving buy-in by prospective partners (Narragansett Tribe, Wampanoag at Gay Head Aquinnah Tribe, Wissatinnewag, the affected municipalities, Massachusetts DCR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Connecticut River Watershed Council, Northeast Utilities etc.) is considered a crucial component of this project. This would include conducting the necessary negotiations with the towns to ensure that their economic development needs are consistent with the preservation plans being proposed. Consideration is currently being given to developing some form of priority permitting procedure whereby potential conflicts can be red-flagged and solutions worked out beforehand.
  - (3) Performing the necessary feasibility studies and marketing analyses, to flush out the concept being presented in this document and to validate assumptions; identifying alternative development schemes, developing cost estimates, and identifying funding strategies.
  - (4) Hiring a preservation consultant to prepare the necessary documents for a National Register nomination for the District.
  - (5) Developing programs, activities and events that can be rolled out immediately or with a minimum of effort, in conjunction with the River Culture Program (pow wows, canoe races, educational workshops and seminars at the Discovery Center, guided tours (ceremonial sites, canoe trips to islands etc.)
  - (6) Securing ownership of the Cumberland Farms building from the State.
  - (7) Securing funding for the development of interim use of the Cumberland Farms building as an exhibit center and implementing this strategy.



- (8) Conducting major fundraising activities to identify sources of funding for major capital expenditures and the annual operating budget.
- **Phase Two:** The second phase (Years Four and Five) will focus on more capital intensive work, including securing the funds needed for implementation and operation.
- (1) Implementing design development for the preferred development scheme.
  - (2) Fund Raising for preferred scheme.
  - (3) Architectural Design for Permanent Exhibit Center and Replica Villages.
  - (4) Construction of smaller capital items (interpretive signage, including those developed in conjunction with other partnerships).
- **Phase Three:** The third phase (Years Six through Ten). Implementation of the full capital plan including the construction of a permanent exhibit center, replica villages and exhibits.

## Local, State and Private Commitments

- The Town of Montague is committed to continue its work with the Native American Tribes consistent with the principles endorsed by the Board of Selectmen in the Reconciliation Agreement, including the delineation of boundaries for the Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District that recognize both the importance of historic preservation and the town's economic development needs.
- The Town will support the Narragansett and Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) in their efforts to submit a National Register nomination for the "Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District", including securing the necessary funding for preservation consulting services.
- The Town will assist the tribes in securing funding from governmental and non-governmental (foundations) sources to conduct the necessary planning and feasibility studies, including marketing analyses, for the proposed "Native Cultural Park".
- The Town will work with the Tribes to secure, from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Cumberland Farms site for a Park Visitor's Center.
- The Town will work with the Tribes to secure federal, state and other funding for the design and construction of Park components.
- The Town will work with the Tribe to develop a Heritage/Cultural tourism program that will help to ensure the preservation of important Native American resources while at the same time promoting the town's economic development goals.

## **Impact of the Project**

- Enhance the public's awareness of the rich Native Cultural heritage that exists here in the Connecticut River Valley and in Southern New England.
- Create a National Model for Native American cultural/heritage tourism.
- Promote a greater understanding of the Native American role in the early development of our Nation and how many of attitudes and prejudices, and patterns developed during this period helped to influence future U.S. policy towards Native Americans.
- Encourage the development of a pro-preservation attitude with respect to the Native American historical and cultural resources.
- Stimulate the development of cultural/historic tourism in the region as a major prong of our economic development program consistent with earlier plans – attracting regional, national, and international visitors.
- Create spinoff development opportunities in the hospitality industry and creative economy and ecotourism, as envisioned in the town's economic development plans and plans for the Northern Tier.

## **DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

### **Background**

#### **National Significance of Great Falls Native Cultural Park**

Taken as a group, the themes and facets of Native American history that the Great Falls Native Cultural Park embodies present a unique picture of continuous habitation of the mid-Connecticut River Valley by Native American tribes from post-glacial times until their silencing and/or sudden departure from the area following their defeat in the King Philip War to their return in the modern era to their original homeland. The proposed park is significant because it contains a diverse grouping of sites associated with 12,000 years of continuous human use and activity centered on the river as a source of sustenance, transportation, commerce, communication and spiritual fulfillment. The determination by the National Park Service (NPS) that the ceremonial stones site (located at the Turners Falls Airport) is eligible for National Register listing is

extremely significant. It represents a first of a kind achievement in the Eastern United States, where native ceremonial customs have been largely misunderstood and until recently unrecognized and ignored by both the traditional archeological scholarship and even the Massachusetts Historical Commission. However, even before this action, the area could boast of an impressive array of native historical and cultural resources, some either listed on the National Historic Register or eligible for listing - a continuum of native history and culture spanning twelve thousand years.

“This continuum (of native history and culture) is demonstrated in the stratification of sites (from Paleoindian to Late Woodland) making up the Riverside Archeological District (National Register, 1975) which covers a 674 acre area on the north and west bank of the Connecticut River in the towns of Gill and Greenfield and includes Wissatinnewag and the now submerged area known as Barton’s Cove. Wissatinnewag, known as the place of the shining or slippery rocks, is located above the bluffs in Greenfield. An Indian fishing station, the site is linked to the water’s edge by a series of trails. Stratified sites also exist on the opposite side of the river bank in the vicinity of the ceremonial hill. These include the Hanneman Site, a Paleoindian site with later hearth components; several sites on the East and West Mineral Hill, and a small Woodland (Algonquian) camp site on Wills Hill immediately south of the airport.”

The resources present in the Turners Falls area offer numerous opportunities for education and interpretation, one of the primary objectives of the Native Culture Park. In making the determination that the ceremonial site is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the National Park Service also recommends that consideration be given to the creation of an enlarged “Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District”, that includes in addition to the ceremonial stone site, several existing National Register or Register-eligible properties (See attached map). The authors suggest that:

“The area can be seen as a large, connected cultural landscape that includes related historic sites, traditional cultural places and archeological sites..., in which “much of the diverse cultural heritage of this area is related to nationally important themes of American pre-contact history as defined by the National Park Service’s thematic framework, including peopling places, expressing cultural values and transforming the environment. ... Stone features, such as the ones evaluated here (in its determination of eligibility), may be integral parts of these properties. Historical accounts, Native American oral history and archeological data support the long standing value of this region for its abundance of fish, fertile meadows and bottomlands for farming and forest resources for hunting. These sources also corroborate the Native American’s reverence for the region’s distinctive topography of river, hills, streams and cataracts; as well as the use of the land and river in the vicinity of Wissatinnewag-Peskeomskut/Turners Falls for sacred ceremonial purposes.”

### **Events Leading Up to and Including the King Philip’s War**

The Turners Falls area is also significant because it was the location of several important events associated with the King Phillip’s War and its aftermath. According to Sheldon (1895), in the

late 1660's, several tribes, which had combined to form the Pocumtuck Confederacy, occupied the land in the middle Connecticut River Valley. Both Native American oral history and Anglo-American literature substantiate that the portion of the river above the rapids, particularly the area surrounding Wissatinawag, Peskeomskut and the area below the falls were known as abundant fishing grounds and intertribal gathering places in the spring when the shad and salmon came upriver to spawn. Hosted by the Pocumtuck, tribes from many parts of New England gathered here at this time to harvest fish and for related ceremonies and celebrations. The return of the anadromous fish each year signified to the tribes the cyclical renewal of nature and a connectedness with the earth mother. The Pocumtuck tribe was also known for its successful use of the broad meadows at Deerfield, Greenfield and Northfield for cultivation of corn, squash and beans.

In 1669, the area to the west of the Pocumtuck (Deerfield) River was settled by Anglo-Americans, and renamed Deerfield. McClelland and Seibert (2008) point out: "The recording of 5 deeds for a total of 8,000 acres of land, much of it prime agricultural land, in the middle of the Connecticut Valley (within the present day Deerfield) in the late 1660's and early 1670's marked the beginning of valley fur-trader John Pynchon's efforts to make Indian land a commodity that could be bought and sold (replacing the declining trade in beaver pelts.) Such transactions and the attempts to form settlements that followed stemmed from questionable motivations and engendered conflicting understandings about the meaning of land ownership, thereby becoming a source for rising tensions between native groups and colonist (from: Melvoin, 1989, Thomas, 1976).

Sheldon (1895) explains that the bounty offered by the river, arable fields, berry thickets and wild forests were the primary reason Peskeomskut was selected by Indian leaders for what appears to have been intended as a permanent settlement in 1675-76. He writes, "Nowhere else could provisions for the summer and stores for the winter be so easily procured." Narragansett tradition and Sheldon's account confirm that the encampment at the falls in 1676 had been established by Canonchet, the Narragansett's Chief sachem, as a refuge for Native American families who had been displaced by conflicts with the Mass Bay, Plymouth and Connecticut colonies and their militias. Says Sheldon:

"Their principal camp (was) at the head of the rapids on the right bank at Peskeomskut. Another was some distance above it, a third nearly opposite on the left bank, while a fourth was on Smead's Island, a short distance below, and still another at Cheapside guarded the ford of the Pocumtuck River. Besides these, every fishing place on the Connecticut as high as Ashuelot (a river near Hinsdale) had its camp."

In May 1676, the Indians who gathered at Wissatinnewag – Peskeomskut had already cultivated and planted the fields and were preparing for the annual fish harvest. On the evening of May 18<sup>th</sup>, Captain William Turner and his detachment of 150 men road north from Hadley to Peskeomskut. There, at dawn on May 19<sup>th</sup>, Turner's men opened fire on the wigwams, massacring the panicked men, women and children. The event is often viewed as a turning point in the war. As Russell Bourne points out, "After the Peskeomskut massacre, allied sachems openly discussed the strategy of King Philip and sending his head to the English as a prelude to

peace negotiations.” Within one month of the massacre, the English offensive in the Connecticut Valley ended suddenly. The end of the King Philip war came not long afterward.

The King Philip War (1675-76) marked the beginning of a transition during which a region dominated by Native American culture (fishing, hunting, farming, ceremonial activities and burials) for thousands of years was rapidly transformed into one organized in the form of small New England towns settled by yeoman farmers and enterprising tradesmen. The Anglo-American settlement of this region is represented by the Old Deerfield Historic District and a number of other National Register Districts, including Montague Center.

### **Broader Significance of the King Philip’s War to Our Nation**

The King Philip’s War resulted in the virtual extinction of the Native Culture in this region, and perhaps as important, it established the pattern of all subsequent relations between Native Americans and our country. The patterns established during the King Philip’s War ultimately became institutionalized in our national policies, our treaties and our agreements, and in our attitudes, perceptions and prejudices toward Native population, as the country aggressively pursued its “manifest destiny”.

As Schultz and Tougias (1999) point out:

“Among the handful of seminal events that shaped our mind and continent, King Philip’s War is perhaps the least studied and most forgotten. In essence, the war cleared Southern New England’s native population from the land, and with it a way of life that evolved over a millennium. The Wampanoag, Narragansett, Nipmuc and other native populations were slaughtered, sold into slavery, or placed in widely scattered communities throughout New England after the war. In its aftermath, the English established themselves as the dominant peoples, - allowing for the uninterrupted growth of England’s northern colonies right up to the American Revolution.” As important, the authors conclude, “King Philip’s War became the brutal model for how the U.S. would deal with its native population. Later names like Tippicanoe, Black Hawk’s War, the Trail of Tears, the Salt Creek Massacre, the Red River War, and Wounded Knee all took place under the long, violent shadow of King Philip’s War.” The authors conclude that in removing King Philip’s war from our history books, we became according to the rubric, destined to repeat it. And that we did with a vengeance.”

### **Lessons of the King Philip War**

King Philip’s war, and the events which led up to it, provide an excellent teaching opportunity for the study in conflict and conflict resolution in general, and for understanding how our relations with Native Americans, in particular, deteriorated to the level they did in so short a time. For more than half a century, following the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, the English colonists and Native Americans lived in harmony in what Russell Bourne (The Red King’s Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England 1675-78) referred to as a bi-racial society. He states:

“For 50 years, the simple 1620 treaty signed by Massasoit, a sachem representing, it was believed, the entire Wampanoag Federation and Plymouth’s Governor, John Carter, worked splendidly. By the treaty, both parties pledged that they would not “doe hurte” unto the other, a pledge that was maintained throughout extremely provocative and risky times. Then in the 1660’s came the cultural disturbance that led to the King Philip’s war – the war that totally ruined the peaceful accommodations of two generations of native and English diplomats.” He credits this achievement, in large part, to the presence of skillful diplomats among both the Native and Colonial populations. States Bourne: “For a number of reasons, the great diplomats of the first two generations of red-white contact were succeeded by a new generation of less accommodating, more bitter personages, of whom Metacom or Philip was one and Josiah Winslow was another.”

The historical figures, King Philip, (also called Metacom), and his father, Massasoit, stand out in stark and tragic contrast to one another. Massasoit, sachem of the Wampanoag, is the man most closely associated with the natives’ goodwill toward the struggling Plymouth Colony in the first years following the landing of the Pilgrims, while Philip is the leader of the rebellion, known as the King Philip’s war. Schultz and Tougias (1999) concludes:

“It seems particularly ironic, then, that Massasoit is seated prominently in our romanticized view of the first Thanksgiving, while the most graphic image of Philip (for those who still study the war) is his severed head skewered on the end of a pike and placed along a major Plymouth thoroughfare for most of a generation. The real tragedy is how we came to embrace one image and lose the other.”

## Concept of the Great Falls Native Cultural Park

The Great Falls Native Culture Park is a logical extension of the “Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District”, an area that the National Park Service has recommended for nomination and eventual inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The Primary Goals of the park would be:

- (1.) The **Preservation of Native Cultural sites** that are either currently listed or eligible for listing on the National Register including the Riverside Archeological District (NR 1975), the Hanneman Site, the ceremonial stone site and other sites of related importance
- (2.) Enhancement of the public’s understanding and awareness of the area’s rich Native Culture, particularly that of the tribes which inhabited Southern New England and this area for more than 12,000 years, through **Interpretive Exhibits, Programs and Activities**; and
- (3.) Stimulation of economic development through a program of **Heritage/Cultural Tourism**, which centers on the creative economy and ecotourism.

## Goals

- **Preservation: To Act upon the recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior, National Park Service (National Register of Historic Places) contained in a letter of December 11, 2008 (see Appendix\_\_\_\_) which encourage the creation of the Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District for eventual nomination and inclusion on the National Register.**

Although the final boundaries of the Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District have not as yet been determined, the National Park Service has recommended that “at a minimum (the boundaries) should be drawn to include the (Connecticut) river, islands and river’s edge between the confluence of the Deerfield/Pocumtuck River on the north; the existing Riverside Archeological District on the north/west side of the river; and on the south/east side, East and West Mineral Road, Wills Hill, portions of the Montague Plain that were traversed by the North to South Indian Trail, the ceremonial hill, the Hanneman site and the plateau connecting these sites.”

The District, as envisioned by the National Park Service, encompasses a very large land area (\_\_\_\_square miles), overlaps four towns (Montague, Gill, Greenfield and Deerfield), and incorporates a diversity of ownership types. As such, the implementation of a preservation plan and strategy will require much discussion and negotiation between the tribes and other parties. The Town of Montague is prepared to take the lead in advancing this concept, and to assist in securing the necessary buy-in from neighboring communities, as well as affected public and private entities. The project is fortunate in having much of this land area already in some form of permanent (or near permanent) protection. These include all of the property abutting the Connecticut River (included in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission License held by Northeast Utilities - the Barton’s Cove Recreation Area, Cabot Woods, and riverfront property in the towns of Greenfield, Montague, Gill, and Deerfield). Other parcels that are permanently protected include the Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area (1,600 acres owned by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game); the Wissatannewag Preservation Site (a \_\_\_\_acre site that is owned by Friends of the Wissatinnewag, a non-profit organization based in Greenfield, whose mission is education and preservation of sacred Native sites); the Turners Falls Airport ceremonial site, as well as large tracts of property on West and East Mineral Hills and Wills Hill, that are protected by conservation easements.

The Town of Montague and participating Native tribes recognize the vital importance of developing a strategy that achieves preservation goals – shared in common by both parties – while at the same time accommodating the long term economic development needs of the town. This applies to a proposed 100 acre industrial park on the currently unprotected portion of the Montague Plains, and future airport development. Representatives of the town and native tribes are committed to work together on the development of management strategies, protocols and understandings that identify potential flashpoints early on in the planning process and resolve conflicts before they occur. The two parties promise to begin these discussions during the early stages of the park boundary delineation process.

- **Interpretation: To interpret, from the Native American perspective, the rich history and culture of the Native American tribes that inhabited the Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District for more than 12,000 years. And to closely examine the nationally significant events of the King Philip's War – including those that took place in Turners Falls area – which led to the whole sale migration of Native American people from this region and led to the development of a mindset towards Native populations that influenced all subsequent relations with that population.**

The interpretive program will focus, through exhibits, programs and activities, on a description of Native American habitation of the middle Connecticut/Quinnetticut River valley, which is associated with more that 12,000 years of human use and activity centered on the River as a source of sustenance, transportation, commerce, communication and spiritual fulfillment. The interpretive program will be carried out in exhibit center locations in Turners Falls, at Replica Native Village Sites (at locations yet to be determined), at ceremonial sites, and at the site of key historical events. This component will include

- (1) A description of the earliest known Native American inhabitants (Paleoindians), who were probably present on the scene as the great North American glacier began to recede from Southern New England up to 15,000 years ago. The Hanneman Site, located to the west of the ceremonial hill, and the Riverside Archeological District contain evidence of this earliest period of Native American history. Much of the Native folklore that has been passed down through the millennium may have had its origin during this earliest period.
- (2) A chronology of Native American history of the occupation and use in the middle Connective River Valley from the Paleoindian period, twelve thousand years ago, up until 1676 – the date marking the dominance of Anglo-American settlement in the region and dispersal of Native American groups (north to Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Canada, or west to the Hudson River Valley. These exhibits will interpret the lifeways of Native Americans who inhabited this region, including the village life of various tribes, the importance of the rich fishing (shad and salmon) and agricultural resources of the Connecticut River flood-plain, that drew Native Americans to this area, and made it a gathering place for inter-tribal ceremonies; the importance of commerce with Coastal tribes; and the sacred ceremonies associated with the ceremonial stones sites centered at the Turners Falls Airport site. The interpretive program will draw heavily upon the Native American oral history as well as the wealth of knowledge and documented history compiled in support of National Register and national register eligible sites.
- (3) A special effort will be made to interpret the significance of King Philip's War, both to the future of Native Americans in this region, following their defeat in 1676, and to the development of attitudes, perceptions and prejudices towards Native Americans that carried forward into subsequent generations and became institutionalized in U.S.



policy. Schutze and Tougias (1999) have described the King Philip's war as "among the seminal events that shaped our mind and continent... which is – perhaps the least studied and most forgotten." Exhibits will interpret both the general themes of the King Philip War as well as the specific, regionally significant themes and events, including the development of the Pocumtuck refuge at Wissatinnewag, and the Turners Falls Massacre on May 19, 1676– often considered a turning point of the war. This effort will focus on increasing the public's awareness and understanding of the events in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century that led to the breakdown in relations between Anglo-American Colonists and Native Americans. Why did relations deteriorate so fast, when for more than half a century following the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, the English colonists and Native Americans lived in harmony, in what Russell Bourne described as a "bi-racial society"? What prevented the two societies from achieving in 1660's the reconciliation that was achieved in 1620? How did the colonists and our forbears come to justify the actions that were taken following the King Philip's War and in subsequent encounters with the Native American culture and how were these viewpoints institutionalized?

- (4) On May 19, 2004, the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town, Town of Montague, Board of Selectmen, joined with the Narragansett Tribe and Friends of the Wissatinnewag in a ceremony of spiritual healing and reconciliation acknowledging the tragic events that took place on the shores of the Connecticut River on May 19, 1676, and thereby began to put the traumatic echoes of the past to rest. The reconciliation also set in motion a process of continuing commitment on the part of the town and the tribes to maintain a continuing dialogue and communication on issues of mutual importance. The creation of a "Native Cultural Park at Turners Falls" is viewed as a continuation of this process. The reconciliation event is itself a story worth telling. Photographic images, video compiled by local access television crew, and a copy of the reconciliation agreement signed between Native and Town representatives will be incorporated into the exhibit. An effort will also be made to place the concept of reconciliation into the broader context of conflict resolution – which be a major focus of the interpretive programming.

- **Heritage/Cultural Tourism: To develop a program that promotes a better understanding of the Native American tribes that once inhabited this region, while at the same time fostering economic development through the attraction of tourism**

The concept assumes that there is a great deal of interest among American as well as foreign tourists in Native American culture, as evidenced by the success of similar heritage/cultural tourism efforts operated in the Western and Southwestern United States; and that this success can be replicated in Southern New England. The focus on eastern tribes, particularly when this earlier history is viewed as a model for understanding later Native American history, adds a unique element. A marketing study will need to be performed to determine the actual market potential of implementing this concept.

- (1.) The story about the Native American tribes that once inhabited this region, and suddenly disappeared following the King Philip's war is a story worth telling because of its obvious National significance. A greater understanding of the history and culture of the Native People will be achieved through exhibits, housed at the Visitor's Center and the Discovery Center, and possibly the Fish Ladder facility; interpretive signage at significant sites, as well as programs and activities that teach concepts employing the various learning styles: visual, audio, and tactile.
- (2.) A Calendar of Annual Events, Programs and Activities will be developed. This will be coordinated and jointly marketed through the existing River Culture Program. This will include special events such as the May 19<sup>th</sup> and August 13 Pow Wows, in recognition, respectively, of the anniversary of the Turners Falls Massacre and the Persid meteor shower, an astronomical event which has particular significance to Native Americans associated with the ceremonial hills at the Turners Falls Airport.
- (3.) Special Native guided tours to replica villages, including possibly a fishing station at Wissetinnewag and/or Cabot Woods and Ceremonial Stone Site at the Turners Falls Airport and other ceremonial sites, possibly part of a larger system, located within an estimated 16 mile radius of the Airport ceremonial stone site. Herb and nature walks. Guided canoe tours to Smead Island, Barton Island – sites of eagle nests - and the Deep Hole area will also be organized.
- (4.) Recreational Events featuring inter-tribal canoe competition, coordinated with the Spring pow wow. Open canoe competition. Fishing-related activities during the spring migration of the anadromous fish (shad and salmon). Tie-ins with programs on the anadromous fish restoration offered by Northeast Utilities at the fish ladder, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife at the Discovery Center and Conte Refuge.
- (5.) Workshops, seminars and conferences on various Native American and other topics to be held at the Great Hall, Discovery Center, making Peskeomskut/Wissatinnewag a "gathering place" once again. Topics could include Conflict Resolution or Native American Ecology or how Native Americans lived in harmony with the environment, as well as the many other topics that describe the lifeways of Native Americans.

## **What Would the Park Be Like?**

The purpose of this section is to portray the Park as a Visitor might see it, explaining the activities which would be available and the historical and cultural significance of each. Much of the Park activity is focused in the Downtown Turners Falls area (Intensive Use Zone), including the canal and riverfront park. Other activity is located at remote sites, including the Native American village replicas and ceremonial sites.

## **A "Cross Section" of Native American History and Culture in the Mid Connecticut River Area - 12,000 Years of Continuous habitation**

### **Entry and Orientation Area**

Visitors enter the Park from Interstate 91 and Route 2 across the Gill-Montague Bridge into Turners Falls. Signs direct visitors to the public parking area, located on Second Street – to the rear of the Visitor’s Center.

### **Visitor’s Center**

The primary exhibit center is located at the Cumberland Farms site. This could initially be in a renovated Cumberland Farms building, but the goal is to secure sufficient funding to construct a larger facility in which the architectural design is more suited to the proposed uses and Native themes.

At the exhibit center a major orientation exhibit will provide visitors with an overview of the Native American story – representing the various chronological periods of the 12,000 years of continuous habitation of the area, from the period coinciding with the retreat of the great North American glacier to the King Philip’s War.

A special exhibit will focus on the King Philip War as a nationally significant event in terms of both its immediate impact upon the status of native peoples who had inhabited the middle Connecticut River area for thousands of year (i.e. the sudden disappearance of most Native peoples from this region in 1676), and on the pattern that it established for all subsequent relations between our country and Native Americans throughout our subsequent history.

An exhibit interpreting the Reconciliation process between the Town and Native tribes will also be developed. This is a special event that deserves to be recognized.

The parking lot of the visitor’s center is also the embarkation point for guided tours.

### **Great Falls Discovery Center**

The Great Falls Discovery center is an environmental education center, operated jointly by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, which focuses on the Connecticut River from its source on the Canadian border to Long Island sound. Its mission is to promote, through its exhibits and programs, a greater understanding of the Connecticut River as a resource, the diversity of plants and animals that are present in the watershed, and the importance of developing proper land use practices that will ensure the long term protection of this valuable resource. There are many opportunities for the development of Native American themes and exhibits that would be consistent with this mission. The most obvious of these is an exhibit that focuses on ecological principals, including sustainability, inherent in Native American early use of the river and the watershed. It is a part of the story that remains to be told. The size of this exhibit will be limited by the wall and other space currently available in the Discovery Center, which may limit the exhibits.

The Great Hall of the Discovery Center will be the venue for “gathering” at scheduled public forums, conferences and workshops, which will be marketed as part of the River Culture Program. Visitors will come to hear guest speakers with expertise on the heavier subjects - King Philip’s War and Conflict Resolution, as well as such topics that explore various aspects of

Native American culture including family, language, ceremony and ritual, commerce, cuisine, nature and herbs, music, art and crafts (including a study of artwork produced by early Narragansett tribes), to name but a few of the potential. People of Native American origin will also be able to discover their roots, and connections with the region's earlier history through genealogy sessions, oral history and traditions.

## **Amphitheater**

The amphitheater located between the Visitors Center and the Discovery center is the site of outdoor exhibits and events. These could include such things as Native Arts and Crafts exhibits and sales, Indian farmer's market, Native music and storytelling etc.

## **Fish Ladder Facility**

The fish ladder facility is located adjacent to the Riverfront Park, and is operated by Northeast Utilities under a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license. The facility is open \_\_\_\_\_ weeks of the year (May\_\_\_\_ - June\_\_\_\_), during the period of the annual anadromous fish migration. It is staffed by the utility; and it currently includes an interpretive element that is focused primarily on the scientific aspects of the migration process and efforts to restore shad and salmon to the Connecticut River. This program could be expanded to include exhibits that illustrate and described how the river and fishery was used by Native Tribes prior to the construction of a dam in 1798, when there was an abundance of shad and salmon.

## **Riverfront and Canal Sites, Programs and Activities**

The Park benefits from the existence of a Riverfront Park, and walkway/bikeway that extends from the former bridge abutment (an overlook of Barton's Cove) to Deerfield on the east side of the canal and to Cabot Woods and the Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center on the west side. The area above the dam (between the Gill/Montague Bridge and the eastern limits of the utility-owned river park) would (with the permission of Northeast Utilities) be the site of the annual Native American pow wows and the canoe competitions. Other events including the annual Reconciliation Day (May 19<sup>th</sup>) could also be held here, as could other scheduled events involving the Connecticut River. Interpretive signage could also be installed along the bike trail recognizing important historical events. The area below the dam, including portions of the island between the canal and dam is envisioned as a potential site for the return of Native American remains being returned for burial under the \_\_\_\_\_ Act. A safe location at this site would also be developed as an overlook for viewing the falls when the dam is open and the river is experiencing high water, in much the same way that it did prior to the construction of dams in 1798. This would be most dramatic during the "spring freshet" and could coincide with other programs.

Northeast Utilities is currently required by FERC license to provide, by arrangement, canoe portage, so that they can canoe the upper pool of the river (Barton's Cove) take out their canoe, and then resume their trip on the lower river (below the General Pearce Bridge in Montague City) towards Sunderland. Special canoe trips that take in the upper river: Barton's Cove, the "Deep Hole", a site revered by Native Americans, and Barton Island, and Captain Kidd Island (near Northfield) two of the locations of the "eagles nests", as well as the lower river including Smead's Island – one of the locations of a tribal encampment in the period just prior to the King Philip's War – as well as other important sites will be provided to visitors. These canoe trips could be combined with fishing opportunities at the islands and/sites along the shore.

Moving down the canal, along the bikeway and walkway, visitors approach Cabot Woods. At Cabot Woods access is provided to the "Rock Dam", an area not far from the confluence of the Connecticut and Deerfield Rivers. In low flow, there's an opportunity to beach comb. And because most of the area on both sides of the river is protected and pristine, it is possible to imagine what it was like when Native Americans fished along this shore thousands of years ago. Cabot Woods is also a possible location of one of the replica Village sites, if permission can be secured from the owner, Northeast Utilities.

Northeast Utilities currently is required by license and by arrangement to provide portage for canoes between the river above and below the dam.

Also located at Cabot Woods is the anadromous fish research center, federally operated facility that frequently opens its doors for public education programs focused on the fishery.

## **Replica Native American Villages and Ceremonial Sites**

Visitors will also have an opportunity to visit replica Native American villages and Ceremonial Stone sites at the Turners Falls Airport and elsewhere. These will be guided native tours that will originate at the Visitor's Center. The location of the replica villages has not as yet been determined, however, possible locations include Wissatinnewag, Cabot Woods, and \_\_\_\_\_. These villages would describe what a typical Native village looked like, the type of living environment that Native Americans from this region would have needed to survive the long, cold New England winter; tribe-specific language and culture; agricultural methods, hunting and fishing cycles, social life, trade and commerce, ceremony and ritual among others.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Register of Historic Places  
National Historic Landmarks Program

202/354-2211 phone  
202/371-2229 fax

Visit or Courier:  
1201 Eye Street, NW  
8th Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

USPS mailing address:  
1849 C Street, NW  
Mail Stop 2280  
Washington, DC 20240

## National Register of Historic Places/ National Historic Landmarks Program Fax

To: Doug Harris, Deputy THPO

Fax number: 401-491-9458

From: LINDA McClelland / ERIKA Seibert

Date: December 11, 2008

Pages to follow: 21

### Comments:

Please see attached determination of eligibility.

**DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY NOTIFICATION****National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service**

**Name of Property:** The Turners Falls Sacred Ceremonial Hill Site (Formerly, The Airport Improvement Project – Turners Falls Municipal Airport)

**Location:** Franklin County

**State:** Massachusetts

**Request submitted by:** John C. Silva, Manager, Environmental Programs, FAA, New England Division

**Date received:** 05/25/2007

**Additional information received** 11/07/2008

**Opinion of the State Historic Preservation Officer:**

☐ Eligible      ☒ Not Eligible      ☐ No Response      ☐ Need More Information

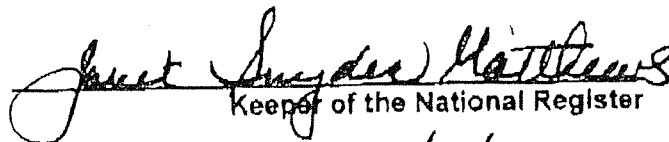
**Comments:**

The Secretary of the Interior has determined that this property is:

☒ Eligible      Applicable criteria: A, D      ☐ Not Eligible

**Comment:** See attached comments.

☐ Documentation insufficient  
(Please see accompanying sheet explaining additional materials required)

  
Keeper of the National Register

Date: 12/11/2008

**The United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Determination of Eligibility Comment Sheet**

Property Name:

The Turners Falls Sacred Ceremonial Hill Site  
(Formerly, The Airport Improvement Project-  
Turners Falls Municipal Airport)  
Franklin County, Massachusetts

Secretary of the Interior Findings: Eligible, Criteria A and D

Comments:

**INTRODUCTION**

On May 21, 2007, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) submitted a request for a formal determination of eligibility (DOE) to the National Register of Historic Places, pursuant to federal regulations 36 CFR 63. This request was in response to a disagreement between the FAA and two official consulting parties, the Narragansett Tribe and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), over the identification and potential significance of stone features located at Turners Falls Municipal Airport (the Airport). The FAA maintained that the four stone piles are features associated with the remains of a nineteenth-century rock wall construction project; the Tribes maintain that the stone features are components of a traditional cultural place (TCP), known as a "sacred ceremonial hill," and include the four visible stone piles and an extended row of stacked stones; further research may reveal additional features.

In June 2007, Paul Loether, Chief of the National Register of Historic Places and the National Historic Landmarks Programs, made a site visit, accompanied by members of the Narragansett Tribe. In July 2007, the National Register found that the documentation submitted by the FAA was insufficient to determine the eligibility of the stone piles as a TCP or any type of historic or precontact property under any of the National Register Criteria. We provided comments to the FAA that detailed the information that was needed to make a decision and encouraged FAA to work with any interested Tribes and/or parties to provide that information to us.

On April 24, 2008, members of the Narragansett tribe met with Paul Loether and National Register staff in Washington D.C. to discuss the determination of eligibility and show National Register staff an independent film entitled, *Hidden Landscapes*<sup>1</sup>, that records, through the medium of film, an oral history with the tribes about the sacred ceremonial hill and a larger ethnographic and cultural landscape of sacred significance.

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<sup>1</sup> *Hidden Landscapes* is now the name of the film series.



The film was later renamed *The Great Falls* and provided additional information relevant to the determination of eligibility.

On the morning of June 24, 2008, at the request of the FAA, the National Register staff had a teleconference with representatives of the Narragansett and the Wampanoag tribes to discuss the requirements for providing the additional documentation the National Register requested in their return comments of July 2007. On the afternoon of June 24, 2008, the Narragansett Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), John Brown held a separate phone conference with Paul Loether to further discuss the determination of eligibility.

On July 7, 2008, a phone conference was held between the National Register staff and Brona Simon, the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to discuss the determination of eligibility. During this conversation, the Massachusetts SHPO verbally verified that they did not believe the stone features were eligible for the National Register as a traditional cultural place.

On July 23, 2008, the Narragansett and Wampanoag tribes, along with filmmaker and anthropologist, Theodore Timreck, and tribal consultant Timothy Fohl, visited Washington D.C. to meet with the National Register staff to discuss the determination of eligibility and provide another showing of the film *Hidden Landscapes* (later renamed *The Great Falls*) to staff.

On August 10, 2008, National Register Historian Linda McClelland discussed via phone the determination of eligibility with Narragansett senior tribal member and Deputy THPO Doug Harris.

On September 23, 2008, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers of the Narragansett and Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) submitted an oral history recorded on film, entitled, *The Great Falls*, to the National Register of Historic Places as additional documentation to address the comments in our July 2007 response to the FAA with regard to the determination of eligibility.

On November 7, 2008, Erika Martin Seibert and Linda McClelland of the National Register staff had a teleconference with representatives of the Narragansett and the Wampanoag tribes. During this phone conference the tribes provided the National Register office with additional information to address the comments in our July 2007 response to the FAA with regard to the determination of eligibility.

On November 7, 2008, after review of a National Register preliminary report, the FAA submitted a statement to the National Register that reversed their previous opinion that the property was not eligible. They now concur with our findings that the property is eligible.

On November 11, 2008, the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office submitted a written copy of their opinion that explained why they believe the property is not eligible for the National Register.

#### 1) CRITERIA A AND D

The Turners Falls sacred ceremonial hill site at the Turners Falls Airport is a traditional cultural place that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and D. The property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Narragansett, Aquinnah-Wampanoag, and Mashpee-Wampanoag history. The property may also be significant to other tribes of the northeastern United States. Located in the middle Connecticut River region of New England, this site also possesses the potential to yield important information about traditional Native American practices, beliefs, and sacred rituals.

The Turners Falls sacred ceremonial hill site meets the characteristics of a traditional cultural place as defined in the National Register Bulletin, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*. Specifically, the property is associated with several living, traditional groups that existed historically and have continued to practice traditional ways up to the present. These groups share cultural practices, customs, and beliefs rooted in their history. Those practices, customs, and beliefs continue to be practiced today and are important in maintaining the groups' continuing cultural identities. Additionally, these groups transmit and pass down the shared cultural practices, customs, and beliefs that are associated with this place. It is also important to note here that the long period of disuse due to forced abandonment, with use beginning again just recently, does not make the property ineligible for the National Register. The *National Register Bulletin, Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Traditional Cultural Properties*, notes that the fact that a property has little continuous time depth does not make the property ineligible; the property's association with the traditional activity reflected in its contemporary use is what must be considered in determining eligibility. This includes recent revitalization of traditional sacred practices at a place that may have been abandoned in the past for various reasons (Parker and King 1998, p. 18).

The site is a highly significant "prayer hill" containing stone features, and is referred to by the tribes as a "sacred ceremonial hill." The site is central to the cosmology of the combined tribes and the traditions that have marked Native American sacred and ceremonial practices for numerous generations. This site directly links modern-day tribes, most of whom share similar Algonquin-based language and culture, with their ancestral origins and long-standing cultural traditions. The tribes named above are direct descendants of those who traditionally gathered at the site of Wissatinnewag-Peskeompscut/Turners Falls for sacred ceremonial purposes, as well as seasonal subsistence activities (fishing, hunting, and farming). In addition the site may have sacred meaning to other tribes of the northeastern United States, including the Western Abenaki, Nipmuck, Wabenaki, and Mahican, who in part are believed to have common ancestry with the tribes of the Pocumtuck Confederacy (including the Pocumtucks, Nonotucks, and Norrotucks) who occupied the middle Connecticut River Valley at the

time of first contact and Anglo-American settlement. Representatives of all of these tribes had gathered at Wissatinnewag-Peskeompscut and nearby Squaqheag/Northfield at the time of the Turners Falls Massacre/Falls Fight of May 19, 1676. This event signified an important turning point in the conflicts between Indian tribes and Anglo-American settlers in the New World and brought an end to what seems to have been a long period of Native American settlement, farming, and seasonal encampment in the middle Connecticut River Valley.

The dispersal of Indian tribes to other parts of New England, Canada, and New York, was followed by an era of cultural suppression in which Indians not only were denied access to traditional hunting and fishing grounds but also became disconnected from their sacred ceremonial places. As Tribal Chairwoman and past THPO of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, explained: "The traditions and the ceremonies started to subside. We were not allowed to go to these places. There were prohibitions written on the books (laws) to stop us from going to these places. Additionally, if the people would not adopt and accept Christianity and still continued the practices, those practitioners were usually taken away. And if they kept going to the site, even without the leadership or practitioners or the holy people or the spiritual leaders, then the places were destroyed... to eradicate them from current day memory." (interview: *The Great Falls* 2008).

The stone features are shown through oral traditions (both Native and Anglo-American), documentary history, and recent verification activities by the Narragansett, Wampanoag, and affiliated tribes, to be interrelated, constructed features utilized by Native American tribes for ceremonial purposes in conjunction with calendar observations based on the positions of the sun and a cosmology that has assigned sacred meaning to the natural environment, astronomical events, traditional medicinal practices, and spirits, including the all powerful spirit Cautantowwit, who is considered both the source of life and guardian of all beings in the afterlife and has his home in the Southwest (Bragdon, 1996; *The Great Falls* 2008 ). Surviving present-day, federally recognized tribes acknowledge that the grouping of stone features here is the central component of a ceremonial landscape, which is defined by the "viewscape" visible from this observation point and interrelated points to the south and west, including several lakes, the nearby peaks of Kunckwadchu/ Mt. Toby, and Wequamps/Sugarloaf Mts., and the distant peaks of the Burnt Hills on Pocumtuck Mt., 16 miles distant in the town of Heath (D. Harris 2008; *The Great Falls* 2008). Celestial observations made by tribal members, tribal representatives, scientific analysts, and field researchers, in August 2007 revealed that the observation point marked by the stone features was aligned with the setting sun through a notch in the ridgeline of Pocumtuck Mountain/Burnt Hill during the height of the Perseid meteorite shower. The passage of the meteorite shower from northeast to southwest during this astronomical event is of great importance in the cosmology of Eastern tribes (Scope of Work 2008; *The Great Falls* 2008). These observations coincided with the mid-August Celebration, which has been an annual event of the Narragansett tribe for more than three hundred recorded years (332, according to the colonial calendar).

The sacred ceremonial hill at Turners Falls Airport is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places because:

- 1) It is one of an undetermined number of traditional cultural places in the middle Connecticut Valley that can be documented through oral history, historical record, archeological data, and ongoing research to be associated with the sacred practices and beliefs of the various Native American tribes that either lived in the middle Connecticut River Valley or that traveled to the area to partake in seasonal activities and traditional rituals. The National Register eligibility of member sites can be evaluated individually as part of a multiple property group or through a district nomination.
- 2) It is an archeological site that contributes to a National Register eligible expansion of the Riverside Archeological District (NR 1975); this expansion encompasses a significant concentration of precontact archeological sites on the south/east side of the Connecticut River in the town of Montague, including the ceremonial hill, the Hanneman Site, East and West Mineral Hill, Wills Hill, and portions of Montague Plain that were traversed by the north to south Indian Trail. In addition to its location on the Connecticut River, a major transportation corridor for Native Americans, this enlarged district also includes the confluence of the Millers River, a major waterway that provided east and west movement across the northern tier of Massachusetts.
- 3) In addition, the ceremonial hill may be one of a group of traditional cultural places forming a rural historic landscape made up of natural features important in cultural beliefs and origin stories and sites related to sacred ceremonial rituals, including but not limited to astronomical observations, gathering of medicinal herbs, and funerary practices. Within the context of other related features, the ceremonial hill has the potential to yield important information to Native American tribes about their origins, relationship to spirits, and traditional sacred practices. Many of the sacred connections to this pauwau (medicine) district may have been severely stressed, and some may have been lost due to cultural suppression during and after King Philip's War of 1675-76 in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> Ongoing research, which includes astronomical observations from the Turners Falls site and a survey of related stone features throughout the region, is contributing to the reaffirmation of traditional practices and sacred precepts and rituals related to this and other sites.

This determination of eligibility is based on a review of the documents provided by the FAA and the consulting tribes, as well as a review of historical accounts; related National Register nominations; oral history by elders, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, and tribal spokespersons; recent scholarship in history, anthropology, and archeology; an independent film (*The Great Falls* 2008); and websites relating to Connecticut River history, Native American history and traditions, and the typology of stone features associated with Native American ceremonial practices.

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<sup>2</sup> The Wampanoag chief sachem Metacom was known to the colonists as King Philip.

## 2) A CONTEXT FOR CEREMONIAL LANDSCAPE FEATURES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

### General

Verified by the archeological record, the area along the middle Connecticut/Quinncticott River, extending from Ashuelot/Hinsdale, New Hampshire, and Brattleboro, Vermont, south to Northampton and Hadley, Massachusetts, is associated with more than 12,000 years of human use and activity centered on the River as a source of sustenance, transportation, commerce, communication, and spiritual fulfillment. The tribes believe they have used the area from time immemorial. This area can be seen as a large, connected, cultural landscape that includes related historic sites, traditional cultural places, and archeological sites. Stone features, such as the ones evaluated here, may be integral parts of these properties. Historical accounts, Native American oral history, and archeological data support the long-standing value of this region for its abundance of fish, fertile meadows and bottomlands for farming, and forest resources for hunting. These sources also corroborate the Native American reverence for the region's distinctive topography of river, hills, streams, and cataracts, as well as the use of the land and river in the vicinity of Wissatinnewag-Peskeompscut/Turners Falls for sacred ceremonial purposes.

Much of the diverse cultural heritage of this area is related to nationally important themes of American precontact history and history as defined by the National Park Service's Thematic Framework, including Peopling Places, Expressing Cultural Values, and Transforming the Environment. A number of previously recognized National Register eligible archeological sites in the area document the continuity of human occupation of the area from the Paleoindian and other eras.

1) Documentation of Paleoindian sites of importance in understanding the lifeways and patterns of the Earliest Americans can be found in The Earliest Americans Theme Study, NHL Program, 2004. (See also: <http://www.nps.gov/history/archeology/EAM/index.htm>). These include the Dedic Site (NR) in South Deerfield and the Hanneman Site (Nassaney 1999) to the west of the sacred ceremonial hill at the Turners Falls Airport.

2) Continuum of Native American occupation and use from the Paleoindian period up until 1676—the date marking the dominance of Anglo-American settlement in the region and the dispersal of Native American groups (north to Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Canada or west to the Hudson River Valley). This continuum is demonstrated in the stratification of sites (from Paleoindian to Late Woodland) making up the Riverside Archeological District (NR 1975), which covers a 674-acre area on the north and west banks of the Connecticut River in the towns of Gill and Greenfield and includes Wissatinnewag and the now-submerged area known as Barton's Cove (Nassaney 1999). Wissatinnewag, known as the place of the shining or slippery rocks, is located atop the bluffs in Greenfield; an Indian fishing station, the site is linked to the water's edge by a series of trails (D. Harris, conference call, October 27, 2008; Dudek et al. 2002).

Stratified sites also exist on the opposite river bank in the vicinity of the ceremonial hill; these include the Hanneman Site, a Paleoindian site with a later hearth component (Nassaney 1999, UMass Archeological Management Memorandum 2005; MHC letter of January 8, 2007), several sites on East and West Mineral Hill (UMass Management Memorandum 2006), and a small Woodland (Algonquin) camp site on Wills Hill, immediately south of the Turners Falls Airport (P. Thomas 1979).

3) The Pocumtuck Confederacy occupied the lands in the middle Connecticut River Valley in the 1660s. According to Sheldon (1895), the confederation included the following tribes, each acting as an autonomous community: the Pocumtucks who occupied the land in the present-day towns of Deerfield, Montague, and Greenfield; Nonotucks in the vicinity of current day Hadley and Northampton, the Podunks at Windsor (Conn.), the Warranokes (also spelled Woronoco) along the Westfield River, Tunxis at Farmington (Conn.), and the Squaheags at Northfield (Sheldon, p. 48). According to one scholar, the seventeenth century was a period of socio-political instability for the member tribes: "Patterns of alliance sometimes shifted rapidly.... Ties between communities were forged, strengthened, weakened and/or ruptured under the pressures, constraints and opportunities that arose from the fur and wampum trade, epidemics, European settlement, and wars (E. Johnson 1999, p. 158)." According to another ethnohistorian, these tribes shared an "underlying cosmology, similar languages, and a long history," this included a common search for connectedness with spirits, called "manitou" and defined as "the impersonal force that permeated the world, observable in anything marvelous, beautiful, or dangerous" (Bragdon 1996).

4) Both Native American oral history and Anglo-American literature of the nineteenth century (based in large part on "pioneer" oral tradition) substantiate that the portion of the river above the rapids, particularly the area surrounding Wissatinnewag-Peskeompscut and the area above and below the falls were known as abundant fishing grounds and intertribal gathering places in the Spring when the shad and salmon came upriver to spawn. Hosted by the Pocumtuck, tribes from many parts of New England gathered here at this time to harvest fish and for related ceremonies and celebrations (Nussaney 1999; Bruchau 2006; D. Harris 2008; Scope of Work 2008; *The Great Falls*, 2008). The return of the anadromous fish each year signified to the tribes the cyclic renewal of nature and a connectedness with the earth mother. The area west of the river, also called Pocumtuck, was settled by Anglo-Americans in 1669 and renamed Deerfield; for many years, Indians returned to the area in hopes of reclaiming it.

The Pocumtuck tribe was known for its successful use of the broad meadows at Deerfield, Greenfield and Northfield for cultivating corn, squash, and beans, and for its storage of food in underground granaries many of which were found by settlers in the surrounding landscape (Sheldon 1895, pp. 76-77; Thomas 1976; Bruchac 2006; Bragdon 1996; Melvoin 1989). Sheldon explains the bounty offered by the river, arable fields, berry thickets, and wild forests as the primary reason Peskeompscut was selected by Indian leaders for what appears to have been intended as a permanent settlement in 1675-1676; he wrote "Nowhere else could provisions for the summer and stores for the winter be so easily procured (Sheldon 1895, p. 145)." In May 1676, the Indians who gathered at

Wissatinnewag-Peskeompscut had already cultivated and planted the fields and were preparing for the annual fishing harvest.

Much, but by no means all historical scholarship and literature, relates to the importance of this area, known in Anglo-American literature as the "Pioneer Valley," as a contested landscape - one which figured importantly in the early interaction of Native American tribes and Anglo-American traders and became the setting of highly significant events in colonial history. Of particular interest to current day historians and ethnohistorians is the century-long transition of the middle Connecticut River Valley from a region dominated by Native American culture (fishing, hunting, farming, ceremonial activities, and burials) to one organized in the form of small New England towns settled by yeoman farmers and enterprising tradesmen. The Anglo-American settlement of the area is represented by the Old Deerfield Historic District (NHL) and a number of National Register districts. This transition began with the events challenging the unity and power of the Pocumtuck Confederacy and presaging the hostilities of 1675-76 (called King Philip's War or Metacom's War). Conflicts continued intermittently between Anglo-American settlers and displaced Native Americans, who having migrated to New York, Vermont, and Canada, remained hopeful that they would be able to return to the middle Connecticut Valley. Hostilities between Indian tribes and colonists ended with the close of the French and Indian War in 1763. About this time Montague, which had been called "Hunting Hills," was settled as an extension of Sunderland ("Swampfield.")

Why  
Turner  
Falls?

5) Important events surrounded the interaction of Native American groups and Anglo-American traders and settlers in the period ca. 1600 to 1763. These relate to legal matters (e.g. deeds of land, alliances, etc.) as well as military conflicts. The recording of five deeds for a total of 8000 acres of land, much of it prime agricultural land, in the middle Connecticut Valley (within present-day Deerfield) in the late 1660s and early 1670s marked the beginnings of valley fur-trader John Pynchon's efforts to make Indian land a commodity that could be bought and sold (replacing the declining trade in beaver pelts); such transactions and the attempts to form settlements that followed stemmed from questionable motivations and engendered conflicting understandings about the meaning of land ownership, thereby becoming a source for rising tensions between native groups and colonists (Melvoin 1989, pp. 56-57; Thomas 1976). Anglo-American history chronicling the events indicates the presence of Metacom (a.k.a. King Philip), the chief sachem of the Wampanoag (formerly called the Pokanoket), in the region in the winter of 1675-76 (possibly at Northfield/Squaheag) when tribal leaders are known to have gathered at a council site north of the river in Northfield. At least one interpretation explains his presence here as indicative of his strategy of laying claim to the region as the center of the unified Indian empire (Sheldon 1895, pp. 138-145). The Narragansett oral tradition and Sheldon's account (p. 145) confirm that the encampment at the falls in 1676 had been established by Canonchet, the Narragansett's chief sachem, as a refuge for the Native American families who had been displaced by conflicts with the Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Connecticut colonies and their militias (Bruchau 2006; D. Harris, oral interview, August 10, 2008; *The Great Falls* 2008).

6) Many Native American families were present in the area and were camped on both sides of the falls on May 19, 1676 when Capt. William Turner and a militia made up mostly of men from the Hadley, Northampton, and Springfield settlements launched the surprise attack known as the Falls Fight/Turners Falls Massacre (Judd 1908; Pressey 1910; Sheldon 1895). Based on the accounts provided by colonist Thomas Reed who escaped from captivity at Wissatinnewag-Peskeompscut/Turners Falls and alerted the Hadley settlement of a great gathering and festivity of Indian tribes, as well as the accounts of members of the militia who participated in the raid, Sheldon reported:

"Their principal camp [was] at the head of the rapids on the right bank of the river at Peskeompscut, another was at some distance above it, a third nearly opposite on the left bank, while a fourth was on Smead's Island, a short distance below, and still another at Cheapside guarded the ford of the Pocumtuck River. Besides these, every fishing place on the Connecticut as high up as the Ashuelot [River near Hinsdale] had its camp." (Sheldon 1895, p. 151)

7) Two important long-distance Indian trails converged on Montague Plain, one a south to north route that followed the Connecticut River between New Haven and Canada (ultimately leading to Montreal), another running east and west through Shutesbury (past Dry Hill) to the east and Greenfield to the west. The earliest route between Hadley to the south and Northfield to the north in the Colonial period crossed the plain west of Lake Pleasant and appears to have followed the north-south Indian trail passing between East and West Mineral Hills in the vicinity of the sacred ceremonial hill and crossing the Miller River north of East and West Mineral Hills. The first alignment of the east to west King's Highway crossed the plain just south of the two Mineral Hills and the area immediately east of the ceremonial hill became an important crossroads for travelers on horseback, stage, or wagon, and, by 1790, a tavern and several dwellings are said to have existed here (see Survey by Elisha Root 1794, in Pressey 1910).

#### *A Native American Cultural Landscape*

The interest of the Gay Head (Aquinnah) and Mashpee Wampanoag and Narragansett tribes in this area suggests that 1) the sacred meaning of this place extends to many tribes of the northeastern United States, and that 2) the well-documented fishing, hunting, and farming activities that defined the Native American lifeways in this region during the pre- and post-contact periods were accompanied by a strong spiritual attachment to the native landscape and a sacred ceremonial tradition based on astronomical observations.

The proximity of the ceremonial hill to the abundant fishing grounds at Wissatinnewag-Peskeompscut/Turners Falls is of major importance and suggests that ceremonial activities accompanied the gathering of many tribes at the falls during the spring shad and salmon runs. Sacred ritual surrounded the planting and harvesting of corn, which bore a sacred relationship to Cautantowwit (Bragdon 1996). Oral history also tells us that the familiar gathering place drew special tribal members and clans at other times for rituals associated with healing and other sacred practices. Great importance is attached to water in Native American cosmology, drawing attention to the importance of "Deep Hole," which is at the river's edge just north of the ceremonial hill (Bragdon 1996). Oral



tradition, as well as other evidence, demonstrates that this area was reserved for ceremonial events.

Of particular note is the Narragansett tribe's acknowledgement that the ceremonial hill is significant for its use in making astronomical observations that figure importantly in the tribe's sacred rituals (Scope of Work 2008; *The Great Falls* 2008). In an effort to understand the extent of such ceremonial use, observations by tribal members, tribal representatives, scientific analysts, and field researchers, were made in mid-August 2007 during the time of the Perseid meteorite shower. At that time it was noted that the setting sun as viewed from the sacred hill was perfectly in line with the notch in the ridge line of Pocumtuck Mountain (and Burnt Hill beyond) to the northwest (290 degrees) sixteen miles away on the evening when the Perseid meteorite shower was most visible (D. Harris 2008; *The Great Falls* 2008). It appears such astronomical observations were related to celestial events, the daily and seasonal movement of the sun, and the relationship of the sun to natural features within what the documentation calls the "viewscape" (Scope of Work 2008). As early as 1643, colonial leader Roger Williams, in *Key into the Language of the Indians of New England*, referenced Native American interest in the constellations: "By occasion of their frequent lying in the fields and woods, they much observe the stars; and their very children can give names to many of them, and observe their motions...." (Reprinted [www.nativestones.com/fell](http://www.nativestones.com/fell)). The ceremonial practices that accompanied such observations involve, for the Narragansett, their connectedness to the spirit Cautantowwit (NR nomination, DOE 2007). Some of the details about these rituals cannot be disclosed. The hearth feature at the Hanneman Site (Paleo-Indian) and a hearth feature (with an associated small mammal burial) east of West Mineral Road (UMass Archeological Management Memorandum 2005, 2006) may also be associated with ceremonial practices that were carried out at some time during the area's long history of human use and occupation.

The ceremonial use of this area is indicated by the National Register documentation given to the National Park Service as part of the DOE of 2007 which notes that the absence of Native American lithic chipping debris and projectiles around the stone pile features supports the interpretation of the site as ceremonial, "in that they occupied a sacred space where the discard of refuse (such as lithic chipping debris and projectile points) would have been considered inappropriate." This pattern of use can be seen in the archeological record of sacred spaces at some traditional cultural sites across the country, where domestic sites were located on one side of a geographic feature such as a mountain, lake, river, or butte, and ceremonial sites that lacked artifacts were found on another side (see, for instance, Medicine Wheel/Medicine Mountain, NR and NHL draft documentation on file 2003).

Additionally, the high number of burials and burial sites in the Turners Falls area is one important element among others that is suggestive of a ceremonial and/or sacred relationship. Previous DOE documentation (the NR nomination that is part of the DOE of 2007) notes that the spirit Cautantowwit, which is related to the ceremonial hill site, holds dominion over creation and death. The discovery of inhumations during agricultural and development activities in the historic record in the vicinity of

Wissatinnewag-Peskeompscut/Turners Falls was not only noted by European American settlers, but recorded to such a degree that local historians in the nineteenth century wrote authoritatively about distinct modes of burials in the area. The modes identified included extended and flexed burial patterns, as well as one highly distinctive circular pattern comprised of twelve graves (Nassaney 1999, p. 223; Pressey 1910; Sheldon 1895). Native American cremations have also been found in the area.

The following entry from the catalogue for Memorial Hall museum at Deerfield conveys nineteenth century ideas about the significance of the circular or spokes burial found in the village of Gill at Wissatinnewag-Peskeompscut:

"Twelve bodies buried with their feet resting in a circle about five feet in diameter, the heads radiating out like the spokes of a wheel... The abundance of charcoal gave evidence of the presence of fire at the burial... It is a significant fact that among the bones and charcoal were fragments [of implements] broken by fire." (George Sheldon, *Catalog of the Collection of Relics in Memorial Hall*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Deerfield, Mass. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association 1908, reprinted books.google.com/books, July 28, 2008).

The spokes burial is an important element to modern tribes within the larger cultural landscape. Reported by both George Sheldon (1895, p. 78-79) and Edward Pressey (1910, p. 63), the circular burial was one of the most significant and enigmatic finds of the late nineteenth century. It was found in 1881 on the Gill farm of Timothy M. Stoughton (within the current boundaries of the Riverside Archeological District, see National Register Documentation, 1975). Pressey attached significance to the number twelve and commented that it "being the extremely ancient number connected with sun worship leads one to conjecture a mystical religious significance in the scheme" (Pressey 1910, p. 63).

Furthermore, artifact collecting during the historic era, and collection through modern archeological excavation, have recovered artifacts, both from burials, and in other contexts, that may be ceremonial in nature. These include stone weapons, smooth rattle stones, a carved stone pipe of a hooded figure (Nassaney 1999), Manitou stones (site observation/personal communication, Paul Loether 2008; *The Great Falls* 2008), and a soft pebble with scratch marks and drilled stone beads that are possibly talismanic at the Dedic/Sugarloaf Site (Earliest Americans Theme Study 2004).

Location of the ceremonial hill at an elevation above Montague Plain, which extends southward from the base of the hill, offers a wide panorama to the south and west. Views to the north are hidden from view by the ancient dunes known as East and West Mineral Hills. Montague Plain (also called Millers Plain) is an ancient sandy pine barren left by the receding of post-glacial Lake Hitchcock. The viewscape from the top of the ceremonial hill reveals a number of natural features said to have sacred meaning in tribal cosmology. These features are believed to take on special meaning when they are viewed from the ceremonial hill in relationship to the stone features and astronomical or celestial events. The importance attached to such features is supported by early Anglo-American knowledge of Indian place names and recording of Indian legends.

The sacred meaning of several natural features which prominently appear in the viewscape across Montague Plain from ceremonial hill was referenced in Edward Pressey's *History of Montague* (1910). These include Lake Pleasant and Grassy Lake, southeast of the ceremonial hill, which he noted for the "power of its fascinating beauty (251)"; Kunckwadchu/Mt. Toby, which with cataracts and caves was the legendary home of "Wittum" in Abenaki folklore; and the Wequamps/Sugar Loaf Mts., which was formed in the image of a beaver by "Hobmock," the spirit giant of Abenaki lore. According to Pressey (1910), what is known about sacred features such as Lake Pleasant, Mt. Toby, Mt. Sugarloaf, and the rivers and streams, appears to have come from the legends of the Abenaki (Algonquian-based language). Many of the place names attributed to Native American familiarity with this area of the Connecticut River can be found in recorded deeds; in many cases these names persisted in local usage and were recorded in the local histories written ca. 1900 by George Sheldon, Edward Pressey and Sylvester Judd. The film, *The Great Falls*, draws special attention to the importance of Wequamps in the origin stories of New England tribes and their relationship to the geological events that created glacial Lake Hitchcock (*The Great Falls* 2008).

Although a substantial amount of information is known by anthropologists about subsistence, food storage, fishing, and farming (corn, squash, beans, and tobacco), little is known by anthropologists about the spiritual beliefs and ceremonial practices of the Pocumtuck, their ancestors, intertribal relatives, and other regional tribes. Recorded observations and the collection/interpretation of physical artifacts at the end of the nineteenth century by Anglo-American historians and amateur archeologists corroborate the claims made by Native American tribes that the general area where the stone features are located was central to traditional ceremonial practices of several New England tribes. Such observations include the discovery of a circle on Montague Plain believed to have "ceremonial" purpose and the finding of several Manitou stones within this circle (Pressey 1910). The collections of Historic Deerfield and the Turners Falls library are repositories of some of the artifacts collected along the Connecticut River, on the Montague Plains, and surrounding hills (Sheldon 1908; Nassaney 1999).

### 3) STONE FEATURES AS A PROPERTY TYPE

For at least the past two decades some types of stone features in New England have increasingly been recognized by non-traditional groups, as well as historic preservation professionals, as a highly significant property type related to traditional cultural practices, including ceremonial, sacred, and medicinal practices (*The Great Falls* 2008: see especially the interviews with archeologists: Dr. James Petersen, University of Vermont and Dr. Paul Robinson, State Archaeologist, Rhode Island; Ballard 2000). However, it should be noted that not all historic preservation professionals agree that some stone features are traditional cultural places. Some professionals argue that most, if not all, stone features date to the historic period and are related to historic wall construction (Simon 2008; Massachusetts Department of Cultural Resources, "Stones that Speak: Forgotten Features of the Landscape," *Terra Firma* 5, 2007). In response to those who insist that the region's stone features can be attributed only to farm clearing or land

division by non-Indian settlers, Dr. Ella Sekatau, the tribal ethnohistorian and medicine woman for the Narragansett Tribe, has stated: "Those of us who know our oral traditions and originations know that's not correct....there is evidence, if they look. It is there." (interview: *The Great Falls* 2008).

There are many references to the sacred meaning of stone features and to Native American tribes in the northeastern United States in early Anglo-American literature to support the finding that such stone features can possess traditional and/or sacred significance. Such sources as the following support the association of tribes at first contact with these features and suggest their sacred importance, especially in regards to effigy-making and burial practices.

Ezra Stiles, a Congregationalist minister who served as President of Yale College, spent his early adult years as a missionary among the native tribes of New England, where he began to make detailed observations of the spiritual rituals of tribal members. He drew attention to the presence of effigy or god stones in the New England landscape (*The Great Falls* 2008). In his entry for September 19, 1794 (*The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*), Ezra Stiles noted observing on top of West Rock at New Haven: "a carved or wrought stone which I know to be one of the Indian Gods, of which I have found about or above twenty in different places from Boston to Hudson River, and particularly between New Milford on West and Medfield Massachusetts on East." (Reprinted [www.nativestones.com/effigy](http://www.nativestones.com/effigy)).

In *Travels in New England and New York* (1821) Timothy Dwight, a later Yale president, commented on the Indian mode of erecting stone monuments under "extraordinary" circumstances (as compared with routine burials) to mark the consecrated ground where burials had taken place. He notes Monument Mountain in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, Sacrifice Rock on Cape Cod, and another site near New Milford, Connecticut. He also observes the recent desecration of several of these sites. "I ought, in my account of that, to have added, that this mode of erecting monuments was adopted on peculiar occasions [for example, the grave of an Indian sachem]. The common manner of Indian burial had nothing in it of this nature. The remains of the dead, who died at home, were lodged in a common cemetery, belonging to the village, in which they had lived. Sometimes they were laid horizontally, and sometimes they were interred in a sitting posture.... These monuments were plainly erected under the sanctions of Religion: for every Indian felt himself religiously obliged, when he passed by, to cast a stone upon them." (Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York*, 1821, Vol. 3, p. 408, reprinted [www.nativestones.com/cairns](http://www.nativestones.com/cairns))

Dwight also observed: "They also formed images of stone and paid them religious homage. One of these idols is now in the museum at Hartford. Sacred stones exist still in several places; one particularly, at Middletown, to which every Indian who passes by makes a religious obeisance." (1821, Vol. 1, p. 85, reprinted [www.nativestones.com/effigy](http://www.nativestones.com/effigy)).

E.G. Squier, in *Antiquities of the State of New York* (1851) noted that such a stone effigy of white granite, measuring 31 inches high and 17 wide, had been found in East Hartford 1788 and was displayed at the Yale College museum. Squier observed: "The superstition of the Indians extended to remarkable objects in nature. A tree or stone of singular form seldom failed to command their reverence. A stone, which, from the action of natural causes, has assumed the general form of a man or an animal, is especially an object of regard, and the fancied resemblance is often heightened by artificial means, as by daubs of paint, indicating the eyes, mouth, and other features." (*Antiquities of the State of New York*, Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, Vol. 11, 1851, p. 170-2, reprinted [www.nativestones.com/effigy](http://www.nativestones.com/effigy)).

Noah Webster, in a letter of 1788 to Ezra Stiles, commented on Indian burials:

"The Indians seem to have two methods of burying the dead—one was, to deposit one body (or at most but a small number of bodies), in a place, and cover it with stones, thrown together in a careless manner. The pile thus formed would naturally be nearly circular, but those piles that are discovered, are sometimes oval. In the neighborhood of my father's house, and about 7 miles from Hartford, on the public road to Farmington, there is one of these Carnedds [cairns] or heaps of stone. I often passed by it in the early part of my youth, but never measured its circumference or examined its contexts. My present opinion is that its circumference is about 25 feet. The inhabitants in the neighborhood report, as a tradition received from the natives, that an Indian was buried there, and that it is the custom for every Indian that passes by, to cast a stone upon the heap. This custom I have never seen practiced; but have no doubt of its existence, as it is confirmed by the general testimony of the first American settlers....The other mode of burying the dead was to deposit a vast number of bodies, or the bones which were taken from the single scattered graves, in a common cemetery, and over them raise vast tumuli or barrows; such as the mount at Muskingham, which is 390 feet in circumference, and 50 feet high. The best of these cemeteries may be found in Mr. Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia*, which will appear the most satisfactory to the reader in his own words."

Thomas Jefferson makes specific reference to stone piles or "barrows," in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1743-1846). He says, "...the Barrows, of which many are to be found all over this country. These are of different sizes, some of them constructed of earth, and some of loose stones. That they were repositories of the dead, has been obvious to all: but on what particular occasion constructed, was matter of doubt. Some have thought they covered the bones of those who have fallen in battles fought on the spot of interment. Some ascribed them to the custom, said to prevail among the Indians, of collecting, at certain periods, the bones of all their dead, wheresoever deposited at the time of death" (p. 223); and, "But on whatever occasion they may have been made, they are of considerable notoriety among the Indians: for a party passing, about thirty years ago, through the part of the country where this barrow is, went through the woods directly to it, without any instructions or enquiry, and having staid about it some time, with expressions which were construed to be those of sorrow, they returned to the high road, which they had left about half a dozen miles to pay this visit, and pursued their journey. There is another barrow, much resembling this in the low grounds of the South

branch of Shenandoah, where it is crossed by the road leading from the Rock-fish gap to Staunton. Both of these have, within these dozen years, been cleared of their trees and put under cultivation, are much reduced in their height, and spread in width, by the plough, and will probably disappear in time. There is another on a hill in the Blue ridge of mountains, a few miles North of Wood's gap, which is made up of small stones thrown together. This has been opened and found to contain human bones, as the others do. There are also many others in other parts of the country" (pp. 225, 226).

Noah Webster also noted evidence that the burning of bones was also practiced in Indian burials and he noted the presence of ising glass (a sample of which Stiles had previously shown Webster), formed of pure clay, and or shells and cement hardened by fire, without glazing, which was often found in the meadows of the Connecticut River Valley. These observations are presented in the context of the then-current intellectual dispute about the relationship of North American Indian practices and pre-Columbian European influences. In the third of his letters to Stiles, Webster refuted his earlier opinion that the Muskingham mounds on the Ohio River between West Virginia and Ohio were created by DeSoto. (G. Hubert Smith, "Noah Webster, The Archaeologist," *American Anthropologist* 33, no.4, (Oct.-Dec, 1931), pp. 620-624, reprinted [www.jstor.org/stable/661015?seq=1](http://www.jstor.org/stable/661015?seq=1). Also reprinted [www.nativestones.com/cairns](http://www.nativestones.com/cairns)).

Recently, archeologists, historic preservation professionals, and others have begun to work with tribes to document and record the traditional and/or ceremonial meanings and the importance of such places. For instance, Edwin C. Ballard has been investigating the uses of specific "U" shaped structures since the late 1980s and hypothesizes that these features are viewing platforms. Such structures would have been used to view astronomical events (Ballard 2000; see also *The Great Falls* 2008).

Through this research, tribes and others have identified several types of stone features including, but not limited to: cairns, rock piles, stone rows, and stone row complexes, linking rows, fish weirs, enclosures, stone chambers, standing stones, pedestals, niches, portals, and effigy stones (*The Great Falls* 2008, see also [www.stonestructures.org](http://www.stonestructures.org), Reference Materials). Each of these types of stone features may have been used for multiple purposes temporally and by different tribes. Some of the uses of these features include, but are not limited to: burial markers, for subsistence related activities, as prayers and/or for ceremonial purposes, as celestial markers, and as viewing platforms (D. Harris 2008; [www.stonestructures.org](http://www.stonestructures.org), *The Great Falls* 2008, NR nomination, DOE 2007; Scope of Work 2008). These features are often related to other stone features and other types of markers and sites across a larger cultural landscape (Scope of Work 2008).

#### 4) TURNERS FALLS SACRED CEREMONIAL HILL

The tribes maintain that this property is an example of a prayer hill that includes rock piles and stone row features that are believed to have been used for ceremonial purposes and as viewing stations for celestial events. Rock piles and stone rows often include godstones and/or Manitou stones, several of which are recorded at this site (Loether 2007). They can be large or small. They are often used as ceremonial directional

markers and components of ceremonial calendars (D. Harris 2008; *The Great Falls* 2008; Scope of Work 2008).

However, while the FAA, initially disagreed and the Massachusetts SHPO continues to disagree with the tribes's assertion that this property is a traditional cultural place used as a prayer hill, it should be noted that the use of the stone row and existing piles in conjunction with the annual Perseid meteorite shower (mid-August) is credible and consistent with the practices of the tribes in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada, some of whom referred to their home land as "Dawnland" or the land of the first light. The use of wheels in ceremonial rituals and healing practices is common to a number of North American tribes and has been associated with native cosmologies in which astronomical observations figure prominently (see, for example, the Medicine Wheel/Medicine Mountain NHL and NR draft documentation on file 2003). Manitou stones are a common marker of Native American practices (Mavor and Dix 1989; *The Great Falls* 2008; D. Harris 2008).

Tribal oral tradition provides further evidence of the connection between sacred ceremonies and places such as the prayer hill and their continuing importance to tribal identity. John B. Brown III, a hereditary medicine man-in-training and THPO of the Narragansett Indian Tribe, has stated, "Remember, these ceremonies were our science. We had a way of delving into the places of other existences, other realities without necessarily intruding upon them. It was more of an attempt to understand our place in the universe and our place in existence. . . . The ceremonies that were performed there would have been performed simultaneously in other places. That area was one simple locus of many loci in which simultaneous ceremonies would have been held." (interview: *The Great Falls* 2008).

Corroborating the Native American claims that the area is associated with traditional ceremonial practices, Edward Pressey in *History of Montague: A Typical Puritan Town* (1910), reported the finding of two sacred ("Manitou") stones at a site on Montague Plain within several hundred feet of the ceremonial hill:

"William Marsh has shown me two Indian sacred symbol stones, figuring seemingly the spread wings of the "thunder bird," the war god, one very rare with eye pierced for standard, the other slightly carved to suggest feathers, both beautiful. These relics were found at different times within the same circle of ground which seems to have been made softer and clearer of stones than the surrounding gravel, . . . in the middle of Montague Plain, at the point where Kunckwadchu [Mt. Toby], the sacred mountain most impressively punctuates a wide horizon of hills when the August sun or the February moon is highest in the heavens. We guess that this was an important ceremonial place" (Pressey 1910).

The stone features are noted by tribes to be the central component of a ceremonial landscape that can be defined by a "viewscape" and relates to locations where other stone features have been confirmed. An ongoing survey has to date located a number of stone features (believed to have sacred meaning) within an apparent circular area having a

radius of 16 miles centered on the ceremonial prayer hill; other identified sites within this pauwau (medicine) district include Dry Hill five miles distant on the eastern border of Montague, a site on a stream six miles distant in Leverett, and standing stones and other stone features atop Burnt Hill sixteen miles distant in the town of Heath (*The Great Falls* 2008). This roughly circular area corresponds to a possible multiple property study area having as its thematic focus traditional land uses and ceremonial practices associated with the region's Native American cultural groups. Within this context, the ceremonial hill with its component stone features at Turners Falls Airport has been determined individually eligible under Criteria A and D.

In addition, the ceremonial hill with its component stone features is considered a contributing property within an expanded National Register eligible historic/archeological district that includes the entire Turners Falls Airport property (including the Area of Potential Effect) and extends beyond the boundaries of the airport to encompass traditional cultural places as well as a significant concentration of precontact archeological sites on both sides of the Connecticut River in the vicinity of Turners Falls. Although the final boundaries of such a Turners Falls Cultural Landscape District are presently undetermined, they should at a minimum be drawn to include the river, islands, and the river's edge between the confluence of the Deerfield/Pocumtuck River on the south and the Millers River on the north; the existing Riverside Archeological District (NR 1975) on the north/west side of the river; and, on the south/east side, East and West Mineral Hill, Wills Hill, portions of Montague Plain that were traversed by the north to south Indian Trail, the ceremonial hill, the Hanneman Site, and the plateau connecting these sites with the river.

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