Penobscot Nation v. Janet Mills: A Case of Cultural Identity and Tribal Stewardship

When: Monday, March 19, 12PM
Where: Harold Alfond Forum 230/231, Biddeford Campus
Free and open to the public | Refreshments will be provided
Co-sponsored by: Maine Women Writers Collection and the Department of Environmental Studies

Penobscot Nation Chief Kirk Francis will discuss the history of and recent rulings in the Penobscot River case, Penobscot Nation v. Janet Mills. Because the Penobscot people are a riverine culture, members of the Penobscot Nation argue that this lawsuit represents a fight for their cultural survival. This case takes on the state of Maine’s history of not upholding treaty rights, and is a fight for the sovereignty of the Penobscot Nation.

Chief Francis will discuss the nuances of the case and look at where the Penobscot Nation will go from here.

Penobscot Indian Nation Chief Kirk Francis

Chief Francis was born and raised at Indian Island, Maine, the home of the Penobscot Nation. He has deep cultural ties to the people, the land, and the river. He is an avid outdoorsman practicing the traditions of hunting and fishing for which his family is well known.

Chief Francis has served as Chief of the Penobscot Nation since 2006. Before becoming Chief he served in many leadership roles within the Penobscot Nation including chairing various committees and serving three terms as a member of the Tribal Council.

Beyond his local service, Chief Francis also serves as a national leader on many issues facing Native people. He was recently appointed as President of the United Southern and Eastern Tribes (USET), after serving as that organization’s treasurer.

The Donna M. Loring Lecture, begun in October 2009, addresses current or historic Native American or Aboriginal issues, indigenous rights, as well as women’s issues, civil rights, and issues of fairness and equality as they overlap with the concerns of tribal peoples.

Photo by Aaron Knox