

Original Proposal for Recognition of Passanageset Knoll

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Hello, my name is Michaela O’Gara-Pratt. I am a seventh grader at Broad Meadows Middle School. I am joined tonight by my classmates: Eve Anderson, Colleen Connor, Grace Higgins, Abigail Kraunelis and Mackenzie Maguire.

I am here tonight to seek your support for our proposal to recognize Passanageset Knoll as a historically significant site. Passanageset Knoll is located in the Broad Meadows salt marsh.

I am going to share with you my research on Passanageset Knoll, reasons why it should be recognized, and ideas for recognition, but before I do that I’d like to explain what led to this effort.

Back in September, our class went on a field trip to the New Bedford Whaling Museum. Following the field trip, Mr. Adams, our E.L.A. teacher, asked us a question. “If students from New Bedford came to visit Quincy, which two historic sites would you want them to know about?” The challenge was that the two sites could not be Adams related because obviously the Adams sites would be stop number one on any field trip to Quincy. The assignment he gave us was to create two tourism posters of the two sites we chose. I chose to research the history of the Broad Meadows marsh area.

Looking for inspiration for my assignment, I looked at a copy of Quincy’s Legacy, written in 1998 by H. Hobart Holly, the Director of the Quincy Historical Society at the time, and by several other local historians. It was in the first chapter of that book that I learned about Passanageset Knoll.

Background Information on Passanageset Knoll:

Many residents and visitors to Quincy know of Moswetuset Hummock. At the northern end of Wollaston Beach, there is a sign recognizing the site; it states, “Moswetuset Hummock was the seat of Chickatawbut, Sagamore of the Massachusetts Indians.”

What many residents and visitors do not know is that Chickatawbut moved from Passanageset Knoll to Moswetuset in the early 1620’s, after many of his people were killed by a plague (likely a European disease for which they had no immunity). According to Chapter One of Quincy’s Legacy by Mr. H. Hobart Holly, before the plague, Chickatawbut “had his seat at Passanageset Knoll, a piece of high ground in the Broad Meadows saltmarsh area of Town River Bay near

Merrymount. It was generally in back of the present Our Lady of Good Council Church on Sea Street.”¹

Chickatawbut died in 1633, and Wompatuck, his son and heir, did not have his seat at Moswetuset. Therefore, Moswetuset was the seat for only 13 years at most. We know so much about Moswetuset because Chickatawbut was there when this area was colonized in the mid 1620’s, and the settlers, including the famous Thomas Morton, documented it in writing. It is likely that for many more years, perhaps hundreds, one of the seats of the Sagamore of the Massachusetts Tribe was at Passanageset Knoll.

Unfortunately, last century, Passanageset Knoll was excavated and removed for its gravel, but it was likely similar to Moswetuset. Like Moswetuset, it was elevated land surrounded by saltmarsh, which provided protection from wild animals, and it was close to the sea and planting grounds, both of which provided food.² Even though Passanageset Knoll has been destroyed, the site remains protected thanks to the Broad Meadows Marsh Restoration project. We propose putting signage there.

Reasons Why Passanageset Knoll Should Be Recognized:

- *Native American history is an important part of Quincy’s history.*
- *It provides unique insight into early Native American life and the effects colonization had on it.*
- *It provides unique learning opportunities for residents, visitors, and students, especially the students at Broad Meadows Middle School.*
- *My research took an unexpected turn. During my research last Fall, I also learned that Quincy is also the site of the state’s best Native American archeological find in the last century (according to Ellen Berkland, DCR Archeologist), and we urge the city to celebrate this distinction. Over 200 Indigenous people’s artifacts, dating back about 3500 years, were discovered at Caddy Park in 1999 during the construction of a playground there. Those artifacts, interpreted perhaps as whaling artifacts, date back 3500 years, back to roughly the time of Ancient Egypt’s greatness. We study Ancient Egypt in grade 7. We propose the story of the people living here 3500 years ago be added to the grade 7 social studies curriculum.*
- *The Caddy Park artifacts currently are out of state, in Colorado, where they were being studied. It is time to bring them home to Quincy and display them or display replicas of them.*

¹ Holly, H. Hobart and Others, *Quincy’s Legacy*, Quincy: Quincy Historical Society, 1998.

² Holly.

Ideas for Recognition:

- *Name the new park formed by the Broad Meadows Marsh Restoration Project "Passanageset Park".*
- *Provide information on Passanageset Knoll and local Native American history to visitors through signage, a website and brochures*
- *Incorporate Passanageset Knoll into Quincy Public School curriculum on local Native American history.*
- *Place something on the site that will remind visitors of the site's significance (e.g., a fishing weir, a mishoon or canoe, a lean-to or wigwam).*
- *Have events on the site that recognize the site's significance (e.g., a weir-building event similar to the one DCR does when the Herring start to run or a historical walk).*
- *Create a website that provides information on Passanageset Knoll and local Native American history.*
- *Create a temporary then a permanent display that showcases replicas or originals of the Caddy Park artifacts*

In conclusion, we have been very busy researching:

- *We met regularly before school, twice a week from October to now, even on a Saturday once*
- *We gathered information from books, newspapers, the Internet and from face to face meetings with experts*
- *We met with and have the support of these experts: Ed Fitzgerald, Director of the Quincy Historical Society; Gill Solomon, current Sac'hem of the Massachusetts Tribe; Ellen Berkland, the State Archeologist of the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation; Superintendent of Schools Dr. DeCristofaro; and many others. Tonight we hope to add to that list the Quincy School Committee as teammates and supporters of our proposals.*