

From: [Michael Behrendt](#)
To: [Tracey Cutler](#)
Subject: Oyster River Marker - WEBSITE
Date: Friday, March 15, 2024 6:12:04 PM

Tracey,

Please upload the email below to the website on Monday. Historic District Commission – Current projects – Oyster River Marker. Call it “Suggestions for text from Roundtable members”. Thanks.

Michael Behrendt

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From: Michael Behrendt
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2024 6:09 PM
Subject: Oyster River Marker - comments on text ***

Hello Oyster River Marker Roundtable,

We have received three recommendations on the text from four members of the roundtable. **Thank you to Richard Belshaw, Steve Eames, Janet Mackie, and Janet Perkins-Howland for sharing your ideas!**

Please look these over carefully. I also attached the document with the four earlier variations.

Please also see the attached memo from David Strong, President of the Durham Historic Association (not a member of the roundtable).

Some members of the roundtable may not have thought it appropriate or necessary to submit comments based on your position or comments that were submitted on the attached text variations. But everybody is encouraged to share your thoughts. **If you will send me an email by this Tuesday, March 19 at 5:00 pm I can still convey it with everybody in advance of the meeting.**

[From Richard Belshaw:](#)

OYSTER RIVER RAID - July 18, 1694

During King William's War (1689-1697) the settlement of Oyster River was attacked at dawn by a raiding party of Wabanaki from the north, principally Penobscots and Norridgewocks. Urged by French leadership in [*Quebec*] to continue their hostilities with the English, particularly over the questionable Treaty of 1693 [*or "of Pemaquid"*], the usurpation of tribal lands through colonialism and grievances born of oppression, the long planned, surprise assault led to the killing and injury of over 100 English settlers, destroyed crops and livestock, the burning of over 20 buildings, and the capture of over 30 settlers. This was considered one of the most successful raids during the war for the Wabanaki and one of the most devastating attacks to the English settlers.

[From Steve Eames and Janet Mackie:](#)

“OYSTER RIVER IS LAYD WASTE”

On July 18, 1694, a force of 250 Wabanaki, principally Norridgewocks and Penobscots led by Bomazeen and Madockawando attacked the village of Oyster River. The French had convinced them to break the 1693 Pemaquid Treaty to continue the French war against the English known as King William's War. Prior to the peace treaty, the Wabanaki had been fighting the English over land encroachment and on behalf of the French who had no militia. The surprise was complete. More than 100 residents were killed or taken away and most buildings burnt. “Oyster River....is Layd Waste” read the dispatch sent to Boston.

From Janet Perkins-Howland:

Front side of the marker:

OYSTER RIVER RAID	(17)
Wabanaki Indians lived here for centuries	(41)
until European colonists claimed this land.	(42)
On July 18,1694, about 250 Wabanaki,	(34)
mostly Penobscots and Norridgewocks,	(35)
led by Madockawando and Bomazeen	(32)
and encouraged by the French,	(28)
assaulted the parish of Oyster River.	(35)
100 inhabitants were killed, 30 captured,	(39)
and 20 buildings were destroyed.	(30)
“Oyster River is layd waste” read the dispatch	(44)
from the New Hampshire Governor.	(31)
Truth and reconciliation is ongoing.	(35)

Back side of the marker:

TIMELINE

10,000 BCE Wabanaki inhabit here	(31)
1635 Parish of Oyster River settled	(36)
1689-1697 Anglo-Abenaki war	(27)
1694 The French encourage the Wabanaki	(38)
to break the Treaty of 1693.	(27)
1694 Oyster River Raid	(22)
1697 Peace Treaty of Ryswick	(28)
1732 Town of Durham NH incorporated	(35)
2017 Durham is the 1st NH town to recognize	(43)
Indigenous Peoples’ Day	(22)

Janet Perkins-Howland also said:

I think my character counts are correct per Amy’s instructions, but I could be wrong.

I started with the Wabanaki being here first, before moving on to the date of the raid, to help contextualize the narrative.

I purposely left in the names of the Indian tribes/leaders, and the quote from the governor as Steve suggested, because these are things that grab your attention and frankly are kind of cool, esp the old english.

The last line about “truth and reconciliation” could be construed as a bit haughty, or at least not 5th grade level, but I am thinking it’s preferable to other phrases such as “reparations”, which people really seem to disdain. I’m wondering if anyone has another idea for language or how to end the marker. It would be great not to end on the war, or at least end on a more positive note. We are constrained by size :) The timeline (as Denise suggested) on the reverse side is educational, and hopefully aspirational in terms of being the first town in our state to recognize the Indigenous holiday...and I hope we can “do something” in the future to further this work! I am not an historian so these dates may need tweaking :)

As for next steps, I propose that this (our current) working group recommend that the Town of Durham set aside 1/2 of 1 percent of their annual operating budget (75k?) towards that last “truth and reconciliation” line. Deciding how that money should be spent could be a collaborative effort with all interested parties in (and involving) Durham, such as the Land Stewardship Committee, HDC/HC, Conservation Commission, HRC, NH Commission for Native American Affairs, INHCC, Wagon Hill Farm group, town library, etc. Carolyn has already done some amazing work in this space. I wonder if we could organize focus groups of Durham residents to discuss as well. The Town Council could have ultimate authority over the funds.

Many ideas have already been formulated for how to use monies such as this, and many more ideas could come forth. This could include land preservation, historic walking tours, exhibit spaces, and celebrations such as IPD in our town. This could also be a great opportunity to collaborate with some of our businesses. How about an educational series at Tideline, called “Pint of History?”

Janet (Perkins)

Michael Behrendt

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