

## Visual Fields

### The Process of Map Design: Equal Cartographic Voice

**Michael Hermann**  
*Independent Cartographer*  
[mike.hermann@umit.maine.edu](mailto:mike.hermann@umit.maine.edu)

The title, Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail, implies equal billing. But early in this project it became clear that Wabanaki content, cartographically, was not equal; in fact, it simply was not there. The map would be dominated by Thoreau's writings with Wabanaki content only implied through the routes taken by Thoreau and his Native guides.

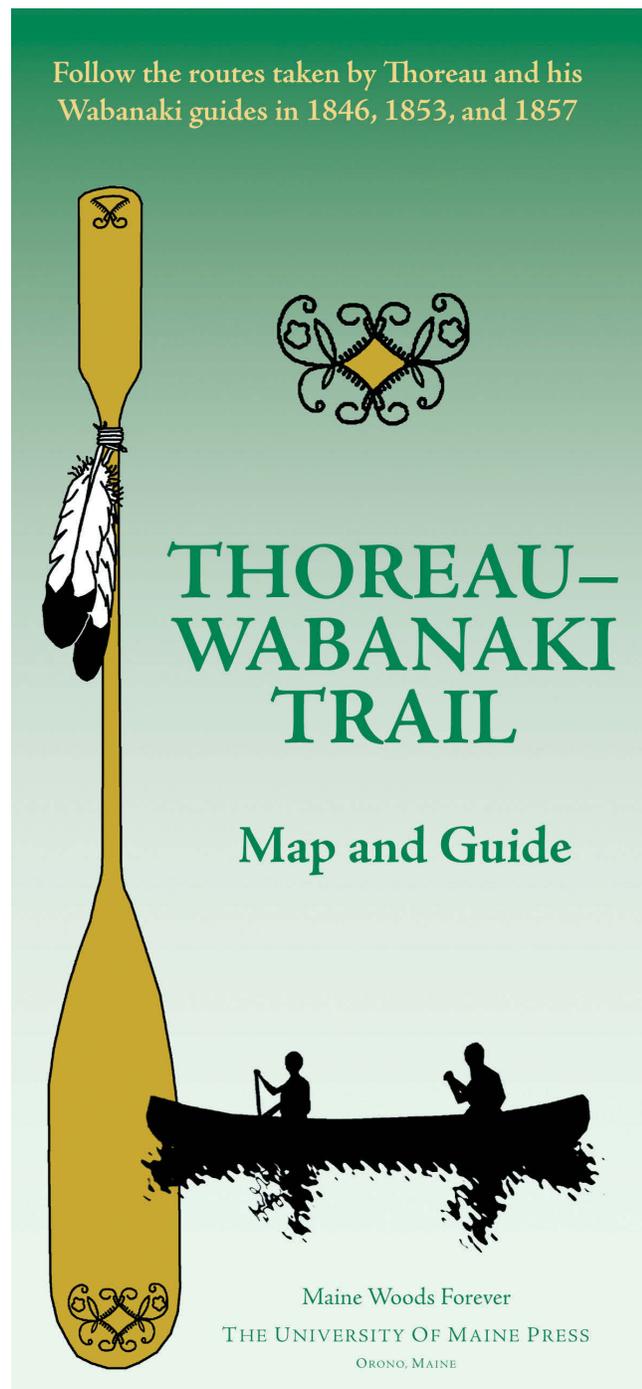
James Francis, a historian and Penobscot native, worked closely with me to find quotes from Thoreau's 1864 book, *In the Maine Woods*, about Indians that were respectful and correct. Not necessarily politically correct, but simply correct—many of Thoreau's observations were wrong because he misinterpreted the scene or was hindered by his own prejudice.

We chose to work with Native placenames to balance the cartography and reinforce the depth of Native knowledge and understanding of place. Thoreau comments that what appears on his Anglo-american maps as an unnamed landscape is, in fact, richly named by his Native guides. We identified appropriate Penobscot placenames in three forms: Native spelling and alphabet, literal meaning, and English translation. This way a more complete story is revealed; the reader can see the Anglo interpretation of the name and understand the descriptive aspects of the name. A second legend was added to give the reader the tools to accurately pronounce the Penobscot language and balance the Thoreau legend.

Cartographically, the native placenames evolved to a separate visual layer with a unique hue. Arrows were drawn to point to the specific feature, as Native names are often particular to a specific place. In most cases this is the only treatment of that place; meaning it is not redundantly labeled with blue hydro text.

By combining Wabanaki orthography and a tri-label approach, the Native placenames become an equal cartographic component, just as Native guides were an equal component of Thoreau's travels.

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