



Flagbearer Activity
Creating your
own Personal Vinotok Staff

Finding Your Staff: Spend a quiet afternoon in the forest. You may wish to take some extra water with you to make an offering to the branch which gives itself to you, and which will become your staff.

As you walk through the woods, be on the watch for driftwood or deadfall—not a living tree—which is at least 4 feet long. You may want to have a staff that is a foot or so taller than you. Test and see what best suits your interests, balance and needs. When the branch finds you, hold it up, wrap your hands around it as you will, when you carry it as a walking staff. Make sure there are no sharp protruding points or jagged broken twigs.

If you have found driftwood, already peeled and smooth, this is perfect.

If you discover wood with the bark still on it you may want to peel it by hand, using a draw knife, or wood-carving knife. If you choose to leave some bark on the staff, wrap some soft leather bound by a thin leather cord around the part of the staff where you will most often hold it.

Charging Your Staff: For Vinotok Festivarians and Celebration Artists it can be very meaningful to Charge or Dedicate our staff in a special way. You may also wish to offer this simple dedication by bathing your staff in a stream or river, sprinkling it with Earth, raising it to receive the wind, then lightly running it through a safe campfire to be galvanized and purified by the flames. With each element you may say this Charge: *“By Water I charge you! By Earth I charge you! By Air I charge you! By Fire I charge you! With Gratitude for this sacred Staff it is done in the flow of Life. It is so!”*

Decorating Your Staff: If you choose to decorate for Vinotok and other seasonal celebrations and ceremonies, begin to adorn your staff with anything that pleases you and has special meaning. Many of us use strips of natural cloth, totems and beads, Rune Carvings and branded rounds, fur, feathers, horsehair, etc. which we continually add to over time. Each of these has some special personal meaning, reminding us of the *Staff of Life*, and our dedication to *Staffing* our community with our service, support and sustainable practices.

Now proudly carry your Staff, feel its balancing support and authority.

Carry your staff raised high in our Vinotok celebrations. Place it outside your front door so that all will know that you and your high standards are here!