

SVN Worldwide

How to Share Meaningful Land Acknowledgements





What is a Land Acknowledgement?

- A land acknowledgement is an attempt to address the misrepresentation of history in our society today
 - Indigenous people were here for thousands of years before contact with Europeans
 - The stewardship of those original peoples created the environment coveted by settlers
 - After contact, the land and resources were taken from those original stewards of the land
 - Our society today exists because of that stewardship and the forced sacrifice of the original peoples

What we hope to accomplish



- By doing land acknowledgements we:
 - Remove the myth that there was nothing really here before Europeans showed up
 - State that the taking of the land and resources was not done in a fair or equitable fashion
 - Verbalize that treaties still exist and need to be honoured



When do we do them?

- Think of a land acknowledgement as part of your identity that you would share when introducing yourself
 - At the beginning of special events
 - When meeting with people for the first time
 - When meeting with people from outside of your immediate region
- You don't always have to do a land acknowledgement
 - If you are having the same meeting every week
 - You are meeting with people you talk to often



What should be included?

- First, state whose traditional territory you are currently on
 - www.native-land.ca
 - <https://www.whose.land/en/>
- Next, determine if there are treaties or covenants covering that territory
- Acknowledge the stewardship of the original inhabitants
- Acknowledge the forced sacrifices that were the foundation of Canadian society today
- Commit in some way to addressing those wrongs



What else might you add?

- Personalize your land acknowledgement
 - Where did your ancestors land?
 - “I am descended from settlers who first lived in the traditional territory of the Wendat people”
 - Why are you sharing a land acknowledgement?
 - “This is my way of ensuring we never forget where we live, or the truth of how we got here”



How to talk about land acknowledgements

- Not everyone understands why we do this:
 - Indians were conquered
 - It's time they got over it
 - They get all sorts of handouts from the government
- More important than the land acknowledgement is talking about why they are important
 - This is my way of telling the truth
 - I don't want to contribute to misinformation
 - There is no statute of limitations on treaties



Age Appropriate Acknowledgements

- Most history books were based on writings of the early European visitors to this territory
 - They were looking through their own lens
 - They were solidifying their role
- People my age were not taught the truth
- We must set our children up to learn the truth
 - The whole story may be too much
 - No one should have to unlearn in order to reach the truth

How do we do that?

- Wee ones
 - Do you think it always looked like this here?
 - What might it have looked like if we didn't have cars, or electricity?
- As they age
 - How long have the first people been living here?
 - How long has it been since others have come?
 - What changes might there have been in that time?

Final Thoughts

- Land acknowledgements should evolve.
 - Reconcili-action
 - As you walk your path, you can include where you've been and where you're going
 - Listen to Indigenous communities
 - Their job is not to teach you, but they need to be heard
- Learn the proper pronunciation
 - A stumble or 2 is ok.
 - Not putting the time into learning another Nation's proper name is disrespectful
- Listen to feedback
 - Prepare to get it wrong sometimes

Resources

- https://give.sicangucdc.org/give/336528/donation/checkout?gclid=CjwKCAjwn6GGBhADEiwAruUcKoD9Sp0SJFvsWpvRM_tzlt4ZoAyDFkJJrhyMxv-YAx0nXPyUNel2iBoC-QgQAvD_BwE#!/donation/checkout
- <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/redrawing-the-lines-1.4973363/want-to-learn-whose-indigenous-land-you-re-on-there-s-an-app-for-that-1.4973367>



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