

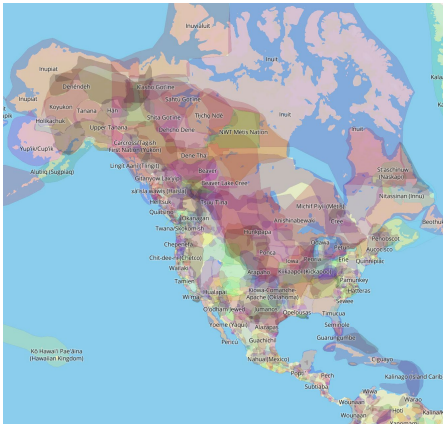
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: FROM RECITATION, TO REAL



RAVEN

5 approaches to developing your heartfelt, authentic Territorial Acknowledgement

Land acknowledgment, like decolonizing itself, is an ongoing process. These steps are meant to help you reflect as you develop your own way of doing Territorial acknowledgements grounded in reflection and relationship.



1. Know whose land you are on. Native-Land.ca is a great resource to begin with. Find out how to pronounce the name of the Nation(s), and the territory. Be mindful of overlapping territories: when in doubt, reach out to your local Aboriginal Friendship Centre or call the local band council offices to ask how they like to be acknowledged. It is good to include what language people speak or have spoken, what Treaty they are part of, or if you are on unceded territories, to explain that the meaning of the phrase is “lands which have never been surrendered or signed away by the original stewards.”



2. Ground it in history. Share impacts of colonialism: dispossession from the land, attempted cultural erasure through residential schools, Indian Act policies and the ongoing crisis of MMIWG. Be mindful also to portray Indigenous People's resurgence and leadership as it is taking place in the present, where you live. Express appreciation for the caretaker values and Indigenous laws which have kept the land in a good way, enabling you to settle and work here.



RAVEN



3. Make it your own. What is your relationship with the territory? How did you come to be here? What specific things make you uncomfortable about ongoing colonial practices within your institution, your community, your family?



4. Acknowledge responsibility. Since in effect, by doing a territorial acknowledgement you are thanking Indigenous Peoples for permitting you to practice on their territory, now is the time to start learning about your obligations as a guest in this territory. What are the Indigenous protocols involved in being a guest, what are your responsibilities? What responsibilities do your Indigenous hosts have towards you, and are you making space for those responsibilities to be exercised? To what extent are your events benefiting your hosts? Indigenous nations have specific expectations of guests, and of hosts: this next step requires having actual conversations with Indigenous communities, saying things like “we want to be better guests, how do we do that according to your laws and hey by the way, what ARE your laws” and being prepared to hear the answers, even those that are uncomfortable like “give us the land back”.



5. Include a commitment. What decolonizing work are you intending to do beyond this acknowledgement.? Moving beyond territorial acknowledgments means asking hard questions about what needs to be done once we’re aware of Indigenous presence and ongoing colonialism. It requires that we remain willing to be “un-settled”, and it means making concrete, meaningful change. How can you be in good relationship with Indigenous peoples, with non-human beings, with the land and water?

Stand with Indigenous Peoples: donate, organize and fundraise with RAVEN to provide access to justice for First Nations who take to the courts to uphold environmental protection and Indigenous rights.

raventrust.com



RAVEN

“If we think of territorial acknowledgments as sites of potential disruption, they can be transformative acts that to some extent undo Indigenous erasure. I believe this is true as long as these acknowledgments discomfit both those speaking and hearing the words. The fact of Indigenous presence should force non-Indigenous peoples to confront their own place on these lands.”

— Chelsea Vowell

Take time to reflect on the following questions:

Where did land acknowledgements originate? When working on or within the traditional territory of a First Nation there is protocol to follow. It can be customary between one First Nation and another to acknowledge the host Nation and their traditional territory at the outset of any meeting. That custom has recently extended to anyone holding events, meetings or gatherings on Indigenous land. This is done to acknowledge the original owners of the land, and express gratitude for their stewardship of the land and for being permitted to conduct your business there.

Who is it for? A territorial acknowledgement is an opportunity for hosts to “use the brief moment of acknowledgement to elevate Indigenous society, governance, and jurisdiction.” — Khelsilem, Squamish councillor

It's a chance for you to claim a teachable moment and let your listeners in on critical self-reflection under way both within you and within your organization/community/institution. It's also for your audience/participants, so that they gain insight into where your collective work is situated: historically, geographically, and culturally. And, it's a small step towards righting relationships with Indigenous Peoples on whose land you are conducting your work.

What's the point? Establishing a practice of acknowledgment can be part of wider attempts to address settler colonialism and build better relationships with Indigenous peoples. A land acknowledgment can be a way to counteract the ideology of terra nullius/Doctrine of Discovery by naming that the land was not empty when Europeans first arrived on Turtle Island. It's also a way of interrupting colonial erasure and foregrounding the Peoples whose land you are on ahead of the other work you've come to do. The practice can also help to create a safer space for Indigenous Peoples involved in your work.



RAVEN



RAVEN

Respecting Aboriginal Values and Environmental Needs

RAVEN : Respecting Aboriginal Values and Environmental Needs

Our vision is a country that embraces the ancestral laws of Indigenous Peoples and their equitable access to the justice system within a thriving natural habitat.

Our mission is to raise legal defence funds to assist First Nations who enforce their rights and title to protect traditional territories.

RAVENTRUST.COM

