

# Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Guidance For Staff and Volunteers of Geoscientists Canada

Prepared by: Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Working Group  
Approved by Board of Directors on April 22, 2022



## Preface

On June 21, 2021, Bill C-15, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Act* received Royal Assent in Canada. Geoscientists Canada strongly supports the content and intention of this Declaration which is about:

- creating a brighter future for present and future generations
- continuing our journey of justice, peace, and reconciliation
- continuing our work to break down barriers and combat racism and discrimination faced by Indigenous People by affirming that doctrines, policies, and practices based on the superiority of peoples or individuals are invalid and socially unjust
- affirming and supporting the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the rights to self-determination and self-government
- protecting Indigenous governance and laws, Indigenous lands and territories, cultures, and languages; promoting economic participation; and creating social and economic equality.

The Canadian *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report* and the resulting *Calls to Action* call on all professions to actively respond to and engage with reconciliation.

Geoscientists across Canada have a strong involvement with operations and businesses in the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples. Some involvements are of short duration, while others span decades, so it is important that long-lasting relationships are built with respective Indigenous Peoples and their communities. Geoscience work often impacts Indigenous Peoples directly and indirectly, making our involvement in active reconciliation a key practice.

Geoscientists Canada recognizes the necessity of advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples across Canada and the important role of geoscientists in this process. To work toward this goal our organisation will promote the following:

- *Engagement* - with Indigenous Peoples with the objective to achieve *free, prior, and informed consent* for sharing the land
- *Empowerment* - sharing the mutual benefits of geoscience activities
- *Environment* - respecting environmental stewardship and Indigenous knowledge and values in their connection to the land
- *Education* - enabling the advancement of Indigenous geoscience students

In our recognition of and respect for Indigenous histories, knowledge, and cultures, Geoscientists Canada provides the following guide for the acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples and their traditional lands and cultures when hosting meetings, public events, and conferences.

# Guidance

## Introduction

### Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Development

The *Suggested Basis of a Land Acknowledgement Statement* found below should be personalised to ensure it is meaningful and heartfelt. If delivering a land acknowledgment is an unfamiliar practice or a new practice, reciting the Geoscientists Canada's *Suggested Basis of a Land Acknowledgement Statement* is a good starting point. Although reciting the *Basis of a Land Acknowledgement Statement* is preferable to omitting a statement entirely, when a land acknowledgement is overly scripted or sounds impersonal it can inadvertently begin to feel like a mere formality. Personalising the *Basis of a Land Acknowledgement Statement* is encouraged.

Delivering a meaningful land acknowledgement takes thought and practice. Below are a few tips intended to help those creating one:

1. Before beginning work on personalising the *Basis of a Land Acknowledgement Statement*, reflect on your goal (e.g., to inspire others to take action in supporting Indigenous Peoples and communities).
2. For in-person meetings, or to additionally acknowledge the lands on which you are personally situated during a virtual meeting, be well informed by researching and considering the following:
  - The Indigenous People to whom the land is home in the region of the meeting (Treaties, Unceded Territories, Inuit, or Métis homelands)
  - The local Indigenous Peoples' websites. Contact them to explain what your function is about and to ask how they would like the acknowledgement to proceed. Land acknowledgements are about relationship with the land and the peoples with whom we share the land.
  - The pre- and post- settlement history of the land
  - Indigenous words and phraseologies including correct pronunciation of the names of nations, communities, places, and individuals
  - Existing relationships between you and local Indigenous Peoples or organisations
  - The present and historic displacement of Indigenous Peoples from that land through unfulfilled or ignored treaties
  - Recognition of large numbers of Indigenous Peoples who no longer have traditional lands or communities due to the ongoing impact of colonial laws and policies
3. Contemplate the language you will use:
  - Use appropriate identifying terms such as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit
  - Use past, present, and future references thoughtfully with respect to Indigenous People

Examples of land and Peoples acknowledgement to be included in the *Suggested Basis of a Land Acknowledgement*:

"Today, we acknowledge that we are meeting on the \_\_\_\_\_ lands of the \_\_\_\_\_ Peoples."

OR

“Today we recognize that we are on the traditional lands referred to under Treaty #x, and used by many Indigenous Peoples including: the Cree, Dene, Inuit, Métis, Sekani (or alternatively in those nation’s languages Nehiyaw, etc.) along with all Indigenous who are present but disenfranchised from their communities through the action of colonialism.”

There is no one specific formula for land acknowledgements. Speak authentically, from the heart, to what you know about truth and reconciliation and how it affects you personally. The aim is to practice land acknowledgements in a meaningful way.

For further information on Indigenous Land Acknowledgements, please review the Reference section at the end of this document. To learn about the history and culture of Indigenous communities in Canada, the history of residential schools, and treaties around the country, the *4 Seasons of Reconciliation* course is recommended.

[\(https://www.reconciliationeducation.ca/\)](https://www.reconciliationeducation.ca/)

## Suggested Basis of a Land Acknowledgement Statement

Before we begin the meeting today, we respectfully acknowledge the importance of the physical and spiritual connection of the Indigenous Peoples to the land. From coast-to-coast-to-coast in Canada, we acknowledge the ancestral and existing territory of all the Inuit, First Nations, and Métis People. [*Once you have completed further research, include the following or something similar:* Today, we acknowledge that we are meeting on the \_\_\_\_\_ lands of the \_\_\_\_\_ Peoples.]

We recognise that the profession of geoscience has the potential to detrimentally impact Indigenous Peoples and communities through discriminatory practices and disregard of Indigenous rights, traditions, lands, and knowledge with respect to natural resource projects.

Our very presence here is built upon the sacrifices and burdens of Indigenous People that remain ongoing today.

In acknowledging this, we accept our responsibility—and reaffirm our commitment—to improve both our relationships with, and our own understanding of, local Indigenous Peoples and their cultures and struggles. We support the contribution of professional geoscience technical expertise toward the sustainability of natural resources.

Please join me in a moment of reflection to acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and present through the action of colonialism—and to consider how each of us can, in our own way, move forward in a spirit of reconciliation, collaboration, and systemic change.

## References & Resources

### 4 Seasons of Reconciliation Education

A series of bilingual online resources which promote a renewed relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Canadians, through transformative and engaging learning towards anti-racism education.

<https://www.reconciliationeducation.ca/>

### University of Alberta Indigenous Canada Course (MOOC)

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada>

### Native Land Digital

Native Land Digital strives to create and foster conversations about the history of colonialism, Indigenous ways of knowing, and settler-Indigenous relations, through educational resources such as the Native Land Map and Territory Acknowledgement Guide.

[www.native-land.ca](http://www.native-land.ca)

### Whose Land

<https://www.whose.land/en/#>

### Land Acknowledgements: From Recitation, To Real

Raven Trust (RAVEN – Respecting Aboriginal Values and Environmental Needs)

June 2021

<https://raventrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/LandAcknowledgementGuide.pdf>

### How to do a Land Acknowledgement

Trent University

2021

<https://www.trentu.ca/teaching/how-do-land-acknowledgment>

### Trent University Land Acknowledgement - Video Guide on delivering a meaningful Land Acknowledgment

August 14, 2019

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8v-e\\_J1NxY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8v-e_J1NxY)

### On land acknowledgements, some Indigenous advocates are ambivalent

Global News

January 28, 2019

<https://globalnews.ca/news/4896904/on-land-acknowledgments/>

**'I regret it': Hayden King on writing Ryerson University's territorial acknowledgement**

Hayden King

January 18, 2019

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/redrawing-the-lines-1.4973363/i-regret-it-hayden-king-on-writing-ryerson-university-s-territorial-acknowledgement-1.4973371>

**Beyond Territorial Acknowledgements**

Chelsea Vowel

September 23, 2016

<http://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>

**Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Issues in Canada**

Chelsea Vowel

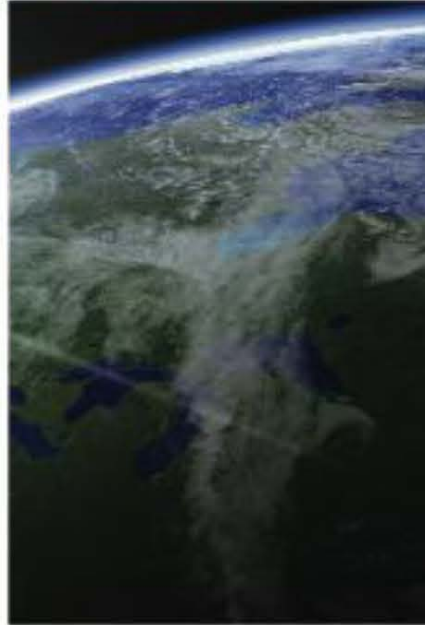
September 9, 2016

**United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports**

<https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>



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