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TRCM

Land Acknowledgment Guide

What are land acknowledgments?

- They recognize the ancestral relationship that Indigenous Peoples have had with the land since the beginning of time to the present day.
    - The land is central to First Nations identity, as people and as nations.
    - This relationship to the land is very different that the Euro-Canadian relationship to the land.
    - First Nations have a deep connection to the land that is based on their creation stories, languages, laws, ceremonies, and way of life.
    - The ancestral relationship First Nations have to the land predates Treaties.
    - Treaties can be included in an acknowledgment, as they reflect the shared relationship to the land that exists today

Who are we acknowledging?

- Indigenous peoples who have ancestral lands in the area where an acknowledgement is being made
- Note that the history of the land includes many First Nations over thousands of years. First Nations traveled great distances, traded, and shared valuable resources with each other. Ancestral lands were often shared among nations through Treaty Relationships.
- The land and all its gifts in a spirit of gratitude.
- Indigenous Peoples who agreed to share the land in Treaties

Where do we do them?

- Events
- Meetings
- Gathering spaces
- Virtual spaces

How should we do them?

- Verbally (gatherings, meetings, events)
- Visual (signs, artwork, webpage, newsletter, email signatures)
- If you have questions, reach out to local First Nation or Indigenous organizations. They can help with identifying the First Nations in the area, the Treaty areas, and pronunciations.
- Keep in mind that the hard work of reconciliation should not be left to First Nations people to do alone.
- Do research (learning about Indigenous history is part of the reconciliation process)
- Use Indigenous terms whenever possible.

WHY DO WE DO THEM?

- Land acknowledgments are an opportunity for Canadians to understand the history of Turtle Island (North America).
- Land acknowledgments also are an opportunity for settlers and new Canadians to consider how they acquired the land on which they work/live/enjoy
- Over time, through colonization and settlement, Indigenous place names have been replaced with settler ones. This is part of the same process that sought to eradicate indigenous languages and culture in residential schools.
- Reconciliation involves understanding this land from an Indigenous perspective and developing an appreciation of Indigenous knowledge systems.
- It is important to remember that land acknowledgments alone will not advance reconciliation.
- Land acknowledgments also represent an opportunity for Canadians to expand on their understanding of history in their region beyond explorers and settlers. Acknowledgementws are also an opportunity to understand the enduring nature of Treaties and their significance to all Canadians.

SOME MISCONCEPTIONS:

- "Land acknowledgments are inaccurate. First Nations gave up their land."
    - The view that Treaties were land surrenders reflects the written documents only, which are not a complete picture of any of the Treaties. First Nations across the numbered Treaties consistently say that the Treaties were agreements to share the land. Furthermore, there is no equivalent concept of "cede" or "surrender" in Indigenous languages. It is not a concept that First Nations could agree to because it is incompatible with their worldview.
- "Land acknowledgments are about shaming Canadians about stolen land."
    - Land acknowledgments are about honouring, respecting, commemorating First Nations ongoing relationship to the land. They also help increase awareness and develop a common understanding between the Treaty partners (First Nations people and non-First Nations people)
- "Land acknowledgments are meaningless."
    - While land acknowledgements are not meaningless, it is important that organizations take other steps towards reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission made 94 Calls to Action and the Report of the National Inquiry into MMIWG made many Calls to Justice.

NAMES OF FIRST NATIONS

When referring to First Nations, it is preferable to use the term that the nation uses to refer to itself. There are 5 major linguistic and cultural groups in Manitoba:

ININIWAK/NEHETHOWUK (CREE) [I-NIN-I-WUK/NE-HE-THO-WUK]

In Manitoba, there are different dialects of what we refer to in English as "Cree":

N dialect: Ininew (singular) Ininiwak (plural)

TH dialect: Nehetho (singular) Nehethowuk (plural)

Anisiniw (formerly, OjiCree) [a-nis-i-ni-new]

In the Island Lake region, people formerly referred to as the "Oji-Cree" are the:

Anisininew (the "s" sound may be a "sss" sound or a "sh" sound depending on the community).

Anisininiwak may also sometimes be used as a plural form depending on the community.

Anishinaabeg (Ojibway) [a-nish-i-naa-beg]

Anishinaabe (singular) Anishinaabeg (plural)

Dakota [da-ko-ta]

The Dakota are closely related to the Lakota and Nakota. Despite the prairies being part of their northern territory, the Dakota did not enter a Treaty with the Crown when the Numbered Treaties were made.

Dakota (both singular and plural)

Dakota Oyate (Dakota People/Nation)

Dene [de-neh]

The Dene nation, in what we now know as Manitoba, can be referred to as either Dene or Denesuline.

Dene (both singular and plural)

To hear the names of these nations, please refer to this pronunciation guide created by the University of Manitoba: click here

Treaties in Manitoba

Manitoba is Treatied land. The following Treaties are represented in Manitoba: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 10. Although Treaties 6 and 10 are outside of Manitoba, some First Nations in Manitoba are Treaty 6 and 10 communities.

In some cases, First Nations were added on to an existing Treaty through a process called "adhesion." This simply means that rather than negotiating a new Treaty, the Crown simply added a First Nation to an existing Treaty that had already been negotiated.