

What is a Land Acknowledgement?

A land acknowledgement is an opportunity to recognize the story of this area, the ancestral and ongoing presence of Indigenous peoples on this land as caretakers, and the relationships that continue today with non-Indigenous peoples who now live here. Acknowledging the land allows for recognition of our ancestors, Indigenous people's deep connection with the land, and the need to respect the land for future generations. Land acknowledgements can be a verbal statement at small, large, informal and formal events. They can be represented visually through plaques, monuments and flags. Perhaps most importantly, they can be used as an educational resource for teaching ourselves and our students about the history and current reality of where we live.

Why do we do Land Acknowledgements?

Land acknowledgements are increasingly being shared in various ways across the country as a component of Truth & Reconciliation. Due to generations of colonization in Canada, there is a general misunderstanding and lack of awareness regarding the history of our land and the role of Indigenous peoples as caretakers, advocates and residents. Acknowledging this history is an integral aspect of sharing the 'Truth' of our country, while utilizing land acknowledgements as a stepping stone for further education and awareness is an integral aspect of 'Reconciliation' within Canada. As such, building relationships with Indigenous people in the community is an integral aspect of acknowledging the land.

Do we have to make our own Land Acknowledgement?

Many organizations have worked in consultation with Indigenous people to form land acknowledgements for this area. People are welcome to utilize these resources. However, working with your school community and Indigenous peoples to form a personal land acknowledgement that is representative of your area is a meaningful way to further reconciliation. Below are some local resources for land acknowledgements:

- **Local Land Acknowledgement [Grande Prairie Aboriginal Circle of Services]:**
<https://northwestaic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/GPACOS-Land-Acknowledgement-Resource.pdf>
- **Treaty 8 Land Acknowledgement [ATA Walking Together]:**
https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-16h-1%20Treaty%208%20poster_Engfr.pdf

When and where are Land Acknowledgements appropriate?

There are no set rules for where and when to have land acknowledgments, though there are situations where it is becoming increasingly common across Canada. These generally fall within three categories: Verbal, visual and educational forms of land acknowledgements.

Verbal

Verbal land acknowledgements can range in formality and length depending on the situation. A shorter land acknowledgement can be shared during morning announcements, the beginning of a meeting, or an informal gathering. A more formal and in-depth land acknowledgment can be used to begin larger events such as assemblies, graduations and school wide events. Land acknowledgements are usually the first item on the agenda. While Indigenous people, Knowledge Keepers and Elders can be invited to share a land acknowledgement, this can also be carried out by administrators, educators, support staff, and students.

Visual

Land acknowledgements can be displayed visually in schools and classrooms through plaques, monuments, and posters. The land can also be recognized beyond a specific land acknowledgement statement. For example:

- Raising Treaty 8 and Métis Nation flags.
- Integrating cultural teachings into the school, such as the Seven Sacred Teachings, the Medicine Wheel, and the Circle of Courage.
- Ensuring the languages of the area are represented, such as Cree or Dene language signs at school entrances, or signs that translate English signs throughout the school.
- Providing physical spaces and opportunities to engage in and learn about Indigenous culture, such as a space where Smudging is offered and allowed, or a school Teepee.

Educational

Land acknowledgements can also be used as an educational process for staff and students. This can be achieved through learning about where we live. For example, we can learn about Treaty 8 and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 6, the surrounding First Nation and Métis communities, the history of Indigenous peoples in this area, the Indigenous languages that are spoken here, the traditional medicines that grow here, and more. The following list provides educational resources for learning about our area:

- **Acknowledging Land and People Map of Alberta [ATA - Walking Together]:**
<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-17c-TreatyMap.pdf>
- **History of First Nations People in Alberta [Empowering the Spirit]:**
<http://empoweringthespirit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/History-of-First-Nation-Peoples-in-Alberta-Mar-2019.pdf>

POLICY AJ – RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS LANDS AND PEOPLES

Exhibit 1 – Opportunities for Recognition

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- **First Nations in Alberta [Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada]:**
https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-AB/STAGING/texte-text/fnamarch11_1315587933961_eng.pdf
- **Numbered Treaties in Alberta: Treaty 8 [ATA - Walking Together]:**
<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-16h%20-%20Numbered%20Treaties%208.pdf>
- **Alberta Treaties 6, 7, 8 [Empowering the Spirit]:**
<http://empoweringthespirit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Alberta-Treaties-678-Mar.-2019.pdf>
- **Treaty 8 Interpretive Centre [Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council]:**
<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-17c-TreatyMap.pdf>
- **Treaty Education in the Classroom [University of Alberta]:**
<https://guides.library.ualberta.ca/first-nations-metis-inuit-contexts-in-education/treaty-education-K-12>
- **Treaties - Indigenous Insight Series [Alberta School Board Association]:**
<https://vimeo.com/album/5545531/video/298206717>
- **Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Educational Resources [ATA - Walking Together]:**
http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/aboriginal_and_treaty_rights/
- **Alberta Métis Settlements and Agreements [ATA - Walking Together]:**
<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-16h%20-%20Numbered%20Treaties%208.pdf>
- **Métis in Alberta History: Part 1 [Empowering the Spirit]:**
http://empoweringthespirit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/M%C3%A9tis-in-Alberta-Part-1_-History-Mar-2019.pdf
- **Métis in Alberta History: Part 2 [Empowering the Spirit]:**
http://empoweringthespirit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/M%C3%A9tis-in-Alberta-Part-2_-Governance-and-Settlements-Mar-2019.pdf
- **Connection to the Land Educational Resources [ATA - Walking Together]:**
http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/connection_to_land/
- **Map of Residential Schools in Canada [Truth and Reconciliation Commission]:**
http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/2039_T&R_map_nov2011_final.pdf
- **Interactive Map of Nearest Residential School [CBC News]:**
<https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/beyond-94-residential-school-map/>