

HONORING THE LAND

Land Recognition vs Land Acknowledgement

It is important to know the origin of the land that one inhabits. Within Native communities, the land was not owned, it was cared for and life-sustaining, the relationship being reciprocal. Often people think that acknowledging who once cared for and inhabited the land is a land acknowledgment; it is actually merely recognizing that colonialism, genocide, and racism worked to erase Indigenous experiences and livelihoods.

To acknowledge this land is to actively work to return the land unto itself, to the caretakers who once nurtured nature, those who ensured the care and sustainability of Turtle Island¹. Acknowledging the land you “own” while still upholding systems of oppression is counterproductive. One must educate themselves on the history of Native and Indigenous folks and cultivate ways to ensure their traditions and lives flourish. America erases its messy past with the people who originated in this country.

TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN DOING A LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT...

- Be intentional about language. What does land back² mean? Or settler colonialism³?
- Indigenous folks are still here. Recognize the past, acknowledge the present and make for a more inclusive future.
- Do your research. What Indigenous-led organizations or movements exist in your community?
- Remember that Indigenous Peoples are the experts of their own realities and histories.

¹ *Turtle Island is a name for Earth or North America, used by some Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the United States, as well as by some Indigenous Activists. The name is based on a common North American Indigenous creation story.*

² *Land Back is a movement that seeks to re-establish Indigenous folks' political and economic control over land that has historically belonged to them prior to colonization.*

³ *Settler Colonialism is a form of colonialism that seeks to replace indigenous folks through the removal and erasure of culture and land.*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How do we work with land acknowledgments to take the next steps into learning these tribal histories or even the colonial histories of the institutions/universities we are attending?
2. How do we push the conversation forward in terms of giving back to these tribal communities? (i.e. schools providing free tuition for the tribal members of these tribes who were forcibly removed, more funding, resources, and outreach into these tribal communities, a required history class around the Native communities our institutions' lands are on)

RESOURCES:

[NATIVE-LAND.CA](https://native-land.ca)

THIS APP/WEBSITE HELPS WITH
LEARNING AND LOOKING UP THE LAND
YOU ARE ON.