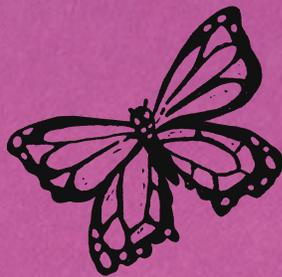




Land Acknowledgement & Stewardship Guide



March 2026



We're glad you're here.

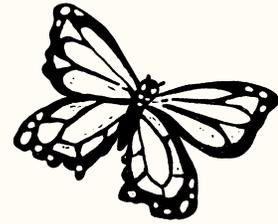
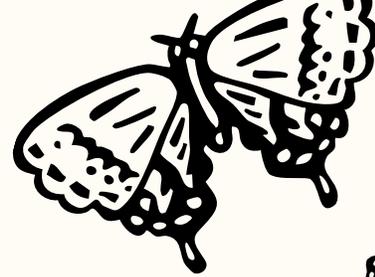
Welcome to our Land Acknowledgment and Stewardship Guide.

This guide offers you and your peers a series of resources, vocabulary, and discussion topics to help your GSA club and TQ2S+ youth collectives organize around Land Justice issues that are relevant to your local Black and Indigenous communities and collectives.

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Land Recognition versus Land Acknowledgement

It is important to know the origin of the land that we inhabit. Within Native communities, land was not ‘owned’ but cared for. The reciprocal relationship between the land and its people was life-sustaining.

Land acknowledgements are often misunderstood to simply mean acknowledging who cared for and inhabited the land. Instead, it actually calls on us to recognize that ongoing colonialism, genocide, and racism have and continue to work to erase Indigenous experiences and livelihoods.

★ **To acknowledge this land is to actively return the land unto itself, to the caretakers who once nurtured nature**, those who ensured the care and sustainability of Turtle Island [1]

As trans and queer youth and adults currently residing on this land, it is our duty to educate ourselves on the history of Native and Indigenous people, and ensure their traditions and lives flourish. It is only when America is willing to reckon with its past that we can begin to build a freer future.

Reflection Question

What are 2-3 next steps your GSA club or TQ2S+ youth collective can take to learn more about the tribal histories of the land you reside on?

Land Stewardship



Indigenous land stewardship is a holistic, traditional practice of deeply connected, sustainable management of the Earth.

It requires us to view land as kin – not just as a resource we are entitled to. It uses practices such as:

- **Generational Knowledge**
 - Understanding the pre-colonial history of the land
- **Cultural Practices**
 - Controlled burns
 - Seed keeping
- **Spiritual Respect**
 - Introducing oneself to a new place, river, forest, or beach
 - Practicing honorable harvests – taking only what is needed, never taking the first or last of anything to ensure regeneration.

Rather than focusing on practices of extracting resources, land stewardship connects spirituality and meaning to our relationships to plants and food.

It involves roles such as seed keepers, healers, and guardians – ensuring both cultural survival and community health!

Core Principles & Practices:

Reciprocity & Kinship: Land is seen as something we belong to, and do not own – fostering deep respect.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge: The passing down of generational wisdom on managing plants, animals and ecosystems.

Focus on Biodiversity: Cultivating native species and ensuring soil health is tended to through control burns and the removal of invasive plant species.

Cultural Integration: Connecting human health, spiritual health, and economic well-being to the health and state of the land.

Steward Roles: Seed keepers, harvesters, healers, guardians, and land defenders who help take care of the land.

Land Sovereignty and Black Land Sovereignty

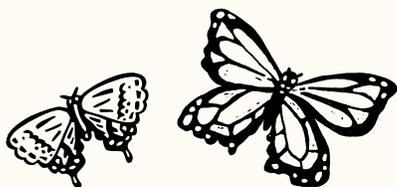


Within the context of Turtle Island, Land Sovereignty is the process of and commitment to returning the ancestral stewardship of the land to its Indigenous people. Land Sovereignty asks that we trust Indigenous people to steward and care for Indigenous land, natural resources, and other ways that the inhabitants of the land interact with it over time for our shared livelihoods.

Black Land Sovereignty provides a framework for Black people of the African diaspora to heal from being violently kidnapped and forced to labor on stolen land.

This framework gives Black descendants of enslaved people a pathway to actively participate in healing the land and its misuse by imperialist governments and powers.

Further, Land Sovereignty for Black people provides tools to free themselves from the way that colonialism has imprinted intergenerational harm onto our bodies, making space for deeper somatic healing.

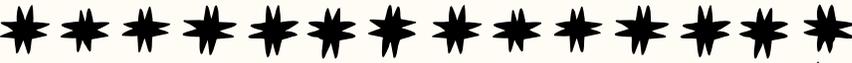


By decolonizing their systemic relationships to their bodies, autonomy, and land stewardship, Black people can begin to restore their ancestral relationship to land, following in step with the leadership of our Indigenous kin.

There must be space to be in a deeper conversation around indigenous land theft, black forced labor, and how these realities inform our relationship to each other and the land. This is an ongoing struggle within our communities, but incorporating black labor and indigenous land acknowledgment is a starting point.



How Indigenous & Black Land Sovereignty Connect



Black Land Sovereignty works **with** Indigenous Land Sovereignty, **not instead of it**. By changing their relationships to their bodies and land, Black people can restore ancestral earth-based practices while following the leadership of Indigenous peoples whose lands they currently live on.

This means:

- **Recognizing that the land Black ancestors were forced to work on was stolen from Indigenous peoples**
 - **Supporting Indigenous Land Back movements and sovereignty**
 - **Building healing relationships to land that don't copy settler colonialism**
 - **Creating solidarity between Black and Indigenous freedom struggles**
- 



Ways that Black People can practice intersectional Land Sovereignty:

Actively re-center Indigenous leadership and methods for caring for the land. Learn about the historic ways that Indigenous protectors have cared for the land. Research the Landback movement and get familiar with local and national efforts.

Connect with your ancestral methods of land stewardship. Gardening, Cooking, Foraging, and Herbalism all have extensive lineages in the Black diaspora. Consider learning more about these methods for autonomy and sovereignty.

Adopt a decolonial approach to land use. Engage in regenerative gardening, become a part of a community garden, or third space that commits to horizontal community use. Get involved in a mutual aid food distribution or fridge network.

Become a part of a Black Sovereignty network near you. Attend a local land sovereignty network meeting, find an online group to support, and/or find a Black-owned food sovereignty network to purchase produce and other goods from.

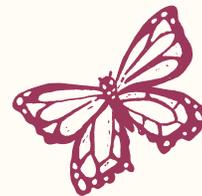
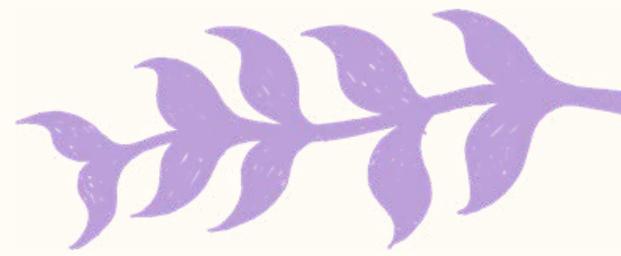
Terms to Know:

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.

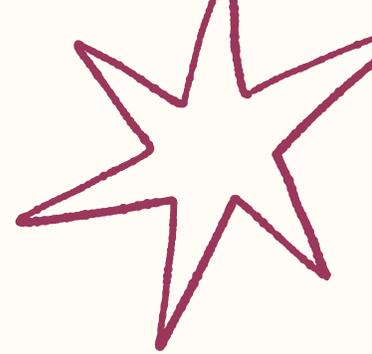
Land Back is a movement that aims to re-establish Indigenous folks political and economic control over land that has historically belonged to them prior to colonization.

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

Source: First Nations Development Institute
firstnations.org



Not a Perfect Formula, but a Great Place to Begin...



An acknowledgment begins as a spoken, embodied action and acknowledges Indigenous communities as sovereign nations. Reaching out to local Indigenous communities to ask how they would like to be acknowledged is a great way to understand more.

Acknowledgements are a collaborative process formed through ongoing relationships with Indigenous people.

Remember: It is an important practice to learn the pronunciation for the names of the Tribes, places, and individuals that you are including!



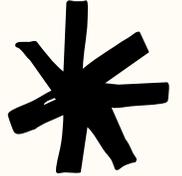
While there is no specific formula or perfect template to help you create a land recognition – there are a few important things to consider:

- **WHOSE** ancestral land am I standing on, and whose forced labor and knowledge built the foundation of this community?
- **WHAT** is the history of the land and any related treaties?
- **WHAT** are the names of the living Indigenous peoples from these communities?
 - Think about **how** the Indigenous people connected to this land are stewarding it – what crops are being grown, what traditions to they practice, what art forms have they showcased?
- **WHAT** are the Indigenous names for this land and the language(s) spoken?

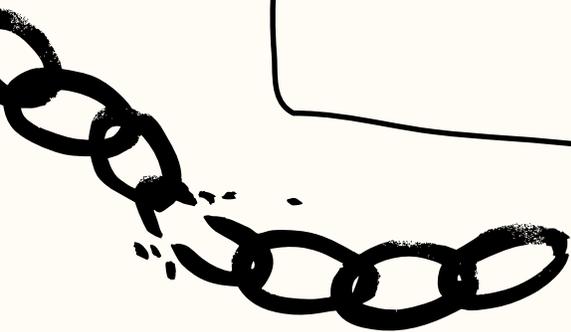


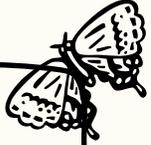
Once you've collected the necessary information,
practice building out an intentional land
recognition using this framework!

I want to take a moment to honor... [identify the tribe name]



This land honors the past, present, and future of...
[include more specific tribal affiliations]

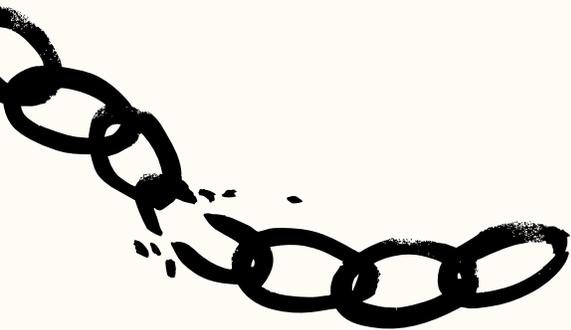




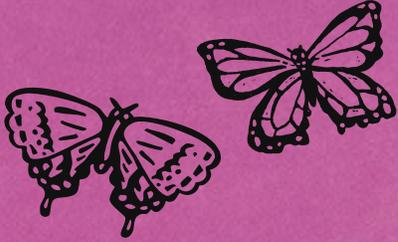
The people of this land... [include details of historical treaties, important advocacy, and important events]



They are currently... [include something that is presently happening in the Indigenous community eg: organizing efforts, community wins, etc.]



GSA
NETWORK



ROSES

