



american
institute for
conservation

Preserving Cultural
Heritage

Guidelines for Giving Your Own Land Acknowledgments

AIC Equity & Inclusion Committee

Please join us in giving Land Acknowledgements at the 2022 AIC Annual Meeting.

A land acknowledgment is a statement meant to respectfully recognize the original Indigenous people who inhabited and cared for a specific area before colonization or displacement. They are often given at the start of an event, as was done at the last three AIC Annual Meetings and will also be done during this year's 50th Annual Meeting opening remarks. Thoughtful land acknowledgments can be impactful. We cannot remove the racist and colonial practices that influence the conservation field without first acknowledging the original inhabitants of the land, past atrocities committed against them, and the ongoing harm that continues today.

During the past two virtual Annual Meetings, the Equity and Inclusion Committee encouraged speakers to recognize the tribal lands that they were speaking from. The diverse locations of speakers and the many tribes acknowledged as ancestral caretakers of those locations emphasized the widespread impacts of colonial practices and the mass displacement and genocide of numerous Indigenous peoples. As we transition to an in-person meeting with a virtual component, we want to recognize both the lands on which the conference is being held (the Gabrielino-Tongva people) and the lands where the work being presented was done. The Equity & Inclusion Committee encourages session moderators to recognize the Gabrielino-Tongva people at the beginning of each session, and individual speakers to give land acknowledgments for their location of work/employment/research. **This is not mandatory and does not have to be intimidating, a few sentences would suffice.**

For Example:

"Today I am speaking to you from name of city, which is part of the unceded land of the name of Indigenous people. I would like to acknowledge the name of Indigenous people community and pay my respects to their past, present, and future elders."

The acknowledgment typically names the Indigenous tribe(s) of the area and, as possible, is presented according to the tribe's preferences or protocols. At a minimum, the speaker gives this statement with the intent to bring public awareness to the communities and histories that are overlooked in that space. However, over time, the acknowledgment should grow as a public commitment to action because of that recognition. Many Indigenous peoples support land acknowledgments but stress that an acknowledgment is only the beginning. We encourage AIC members to think about how they can support Indigenous communities in their area through their actions, donations (monetary or time), allyship, speaking out, etc.

Why is AIC giving Land Acknowledgements?

AIC's Code of Ethics includes Statement II: "All actions of the conservation professional must be governed by an informed respect for the cultural property, its unique character and significance, and the people or person who created it." As with any cultural preservation effort, we cannot forget the importance of people in our mission to preserve memory and heritage. Providing this statement is one gesture to demonstrate our recognition of this history and respect for the community where we are holding our activities. It is also important to recognize that colonialism and displacement have benefitted many of the cultural institutions in which conservators work and has shaped our overall field. Therefore, EIC is committed to including land acknowledgments at all future annual meetings.

Tips and Resources:

- [Native Land Digital Map](#) is a good place to start when looking for the Indigenous tribes that may have or currently inhabit your area
- Enter your Canadian or US zip code into this [Land Acknowledgement Bot](#) (or text your zip code to 907 312 5085) to receive a message telling you the Native land you are living on. This application is a collaboration between Native Land, Code for Anchorage, and the Anchorage i-team, a Municipality of Anchorage Bloomberg Philanthropy Innovation Team.
- Try to use the name that the Indigenous group prefers to call themselves by today. We suggest consulting tribal-run websites. Although reaching out to the tribe directly is usually a good idea, we do not currently suggest requests to tribal members as they are grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic and these requests could be burdensome at this time.

Online Resources:

[Guide to Indigenous Land and Territorial Acknowledgements for Cultural Institutions](#)

[Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement](#)

[Native Governance Center: Indigenous Land Acknowledgement](#)

[Are you planning to do a Land Acknowledgement? Guidelines from American Indians in Children's Literature \(AICL\)](#)

Discussions Around Land Acknowledgements:

["Interview with Endawnis Spears on Land Acknowledgment, Native Communities and the Role of the Humanities Today" Federation of State Humanities Councils](#)

["What are land acknowledgments and why do they matter?" Selena Mills](#)

["I regret it': Hayden King on writing Ryerson University's territorial acknowledgment" CBC](#)

Support Indigenous Artists and Communities

[Native Arts and Cultures Foundation](#)

[Native American Rights Fund](#)

[Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums](#)

Please don't worry about making a mistake! People will appreciate your best effort.

More info, resources, and discussions around land acknowledgments can be found on the [EIC Land Acknowledgement wiki page](#).

Do you have any thoughts, resources, or questions about land acknowledgments?

Share them with us on the Equity and Inclusion in Conversation Community Higher Logic Forum or email them to us at: eic@culturalheritage.org. You can also use our [anonymous feedback form](#).