

Land Acknowledgements Readings and Resource List

Tips for how to do it well:

Native Governance Center (2019). A guide to indigenous land acknowledgment.

<https://nativegov.org/news/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/> (Josh)

- Self-reflection
 - What do you want audience to do after reading/hearing the acknowledgment? How to inspire others to “take action to support Indigenous communities” Ask “How am I leaving Indigenous people in a stronger, more empowered place because of this land acknowledgment?”
- Build authentic relationships with Indigenous people
 - “If you reach out for help, lead the conversation by asking an Indigenous person what you can do for them.”
 - Compensation for emotional labor
- Take action
 - Support Indigenous organizations and grassroots change movements
 - Spend time creating an action plan rather than a land acknowledgment statement “Your action plan will highlight the concrete steps you plan to take to support Indigenous people into the future.”
 - [Beyond Land Acknowledgment Explainer Video](#) (4 min.)
 - [Beyond Land Acknowledgment: A Guide](#) (10 pages)

Native Land Digital (2019?). Territory Acknowledgement.

<https://native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement/>

NOS

- Very short piece. Who is Native Land Digital? Canadian not-for-profit org, Indigenous led.
- Purpose: Insert awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life
- Can be subtle (I think meant in a good way? A frequent, small thing.). Can be a token gesture (bad).
- “What are you, or your organization, doing beyond acknowledging the territory where you live, work, or hold your events?”
- Useful questions to answer for ourselves:
 - Why is this acknowledgement happening?
 - How does this acknowledgement relate to the event or work you are doing?
 - What is the history of this territory? What are the impacts of colonialism here?
 - What is your relationship to this territory? How did you come to be here?
 - What intentions do you have to disrupt and dismantle colonialism beyond this territory acknowledgement?
 -

[A guide to acknowledging First Peoples and traditional land](#) (2021)

Melinda

Goals:

- Raise awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life,
- Recognize the ongoing history of colonialism and abuse of Indigenous communities
- Acknowledge our personal/organizational position within the system of colonization.
- Encourage actions to support Indigenous communities

- Reflect on your positionality - become more aware of the responsibilities and opportunities you have in reconciliation
- Take action: Use your platform to draw attention to Indigenous initiatives and movements, Indigenous-led projects, or explain tangible ways through which you will leverage your power and voice in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

Example acknowledgements:

[U of Michigan Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology](#)

Critiques:

Čhaŋtémaza (Neil McKay) and Monica Siems McKay. 2020. "Where We Stand: The University of Minnesota and Dakhóta Treaty Lands." Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community, no. 17.

<https://editions.lib.umn.edu/openrivers/where-we-stand>.

[‘Land Acknowledgments’ Are Just Moral Exhibitionism](#)

Cecilia

[Land acknowledgments meant to honor Indigenous people too often do the opposite – erasing American Indians and sanitizing history instead](#)

NOS

- This is fairly short and very clear and specific about what not to do.
- "Yet the historical and anthropological facts demonstrate that many contemporary land acknowledgments **unintentionally communicate false ideas** about the history of dispossession and the current realities of American Indians and Alaska Natives."
- "'...land acknowledgments can undermine Indigenous sovereignty in ways that are both insidious and often incomprehensible to non-Indigenous people.'"
- "Land acknowledgments are not harmful, we believe, if they are done in a way that is respectful of the Indigenous nations who claim the land, accurately tell the story of how the land passed from Indigenous to non-Indigenous control, and chart a path forward for redressing the harm inflicted through the process of land dispossession."
- "If an acknowledgment is discomfoting and triggers uncomfortable conversations versus self-congratulation, it is likely on the right track."

[Land Acknowledgments Accomplish Little](#)

Karen

- specific to academic audiences, critique is that it is preaching to the choir
- "If you feel obligated to discuss Native Americans' issues before beginning a scientific talk, respect the purpose of an academic setting and help us learn something new."

[As land acknowledgments become more common, Indigenous people grapple with next steps](#)

Melinda

critiques:

- the work to create them often falls too heavily on the shoulders of Native people themselves
- that the statements can be focused on the past and ignore the present or the future
- that they can be seen as an end in and of themselves as opposed to the beginning of decolonization

Uncategorized:

Lecture by a UM and MSU alumnus whose area of study is "indigenous environmental studies" speaking about various things including land acknowledgements. Some useful points even just in the news blurb about the talk. (51 minute talk on YouTube)

<https://lsa.umich.edu/umbs/news-events/all-news/watch--treaty-rights--climate-change--and-bio-cultural-sovereign.html>

[NEH grant details: Mapping Indigenous American Cultures and Living Histories](#)

[Map of Indigenous American Cultures and Living Histories \(MIAC-LH\) – Learning the Land \(indigenousmap.org\)](#)

[CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#) (Josh)

- Nature Comment: [Operationalizing the CARE and FAIR Principles for Indigenous data futures](#)
- “Indigenous data are data, information, and knowledge, in any format, that impact Indigenous Peoples, nations, and communities at the collective and individual levels; data about their resources and environments, data about them as Individuals, and data about them as collectives” (Nature, p. 1). Indigenous data also includes data collected by governments and institutions about Indigenous Peoples and their territories.
- Collective Benefit
 - Actively support the use and reuse of data by Indigenous nations and communities; Any value created from Indigenous data should benefit Indigenous communities in an equitable manner
- Authority to Control
 - Indigenous data governance enables Indigenous Peoples and governing bodies to determine how Indigenous Peoples, as well as Indigenous lands, territories, resources, knowledges, and geographical indicators, are represented and identified within data.
- Responsibility
 - Relationship building; Capacity building - “Use of Indigenous data invokes a reciprocal responsibility to enhance data literacy within Indigenous communities and to support the development of an Indigenous data workforce and digital infrastructure to enable the creation, collection, management, security, governance, and application of data.”
- Ethics
 - Ethical data are data that do not stigmatize or portray Indigenous Peoples, cultures, or knowledges in terms of deficit; Metadata should acknowledge the provenance and purpose and any limitations or obligations in secondary use inclusive of issues of consent.
- “Today there is a paradox of scarcity and abundance for Indigenous data. There is a scarcity of data that align with Indigenous rights and interests and which Indigenous Peoples can control and access in a manner consistent with the CARE Principles. There is an abundance of data that are buried in larger collections, hard to find, mislabelled, and controlled (legally and literally) by others in a manner inconsistent with the FAIR and CARE Principles” (Nature, p. 2).
- Earth Science Information Partners (ESIP) are working toward developing guidance on how to operationalize CARE and FAIR for repositories.
 - [Presentation at ESIP Summer Meeting](#) (July 2021, 90 min.)
- “Concerns about secondary use of data, problems with bias and social inequity, and limited opportunities for benefit-sharing, have focused attention on the tension that Indigenous communities feel between protecting their interests in scientific data generated from their lands, waters, and people, while supporting, or being subject to open data and data sharing initiatives” (Nature, p. 3).

- “It would be regretful for Indigenous data to be misused. It is equally regrettable that Indigenous data are left aside due to lack of identifiers such as provenance or attribution metadata or unfamiliarity with interacting with Indigenous Peoples or their data. Exclusion of Indigenous data essentially erases Indigenous Peoples and interests from data related futures due to the perceived additional work because of uncertainty” (Nature, p. 4).

[National Tribal Geographic Information Support Center \(NTGISC\)](#)

- [ArcGIS Online content](#)

[Local Contexts TK Labels](#)

- [Christen, Kimberly \(2015\) "Tribal Archives, Traditional Knowledge, and Local Contexts: Why the “s” Matters." Journal of Western Archives: Vol. 6 : Iss. 1 , Article 3.](#) (Article with more background/discussion about TK Labels)

Karen

- [GCRC Proposal: An Open Licensing Scheme for Traditional Knowledge](#) (Josh)
 - This is a report referenced in Chapter 7 of Digital Mapping and Indigenous America that extends the TK license/label discussion into the context of digital cartography.
 - There is a table on p. 20 that gives a few examples of concerns expressed by indigenous communities (and the proposed licenses compatible with these concerns, defined on pp. 13-19). There are some interesting examples like not wanting knowledge to be used by commercial hunters or mining companies.

[UChicago Guide for Land and Labor Acknowledgements](#)

Cecilia

Native Land Information System → Data Sovereignty <https://nativeland.info/about/data-sovereignty/>

Melinda

- the United States Government has maintained meticulous records about indigenous populations, their health, incomes, education, land status, law and order, etc. And, despite the fact that Native American Tribes are recognized as sovereign nations within the United States, the U.S. Government still maintains almost complete control over this data.
- The failure of the BIA to provide even basic information about leasing and transactions of Native lands makes public scrutiny of these programs difficult, if not impossible.
- The path forward towards data sovereignty has 3 complementary goals:
 - 1) **Make external data accessible**
 - 2) Develop native-based research
 - 3) Develop knowledge translation models

<https://www.continuum.umn.edu/2022/03/borcherts-map-library-is-rolling-along/>

“It’s impossible to think geographically without maps,” said the late Regents Professor John Borchert in the first episode of a 10-program series on the “[Geography of Minnesota](#).” - what do we think of this statement?

New Book: [Decolonizing Geography](#)

Esri Press Book: [Tribal GIS: Supporting Native American Decision-Making](#)

- "Tribal leaders' stories about the challenges and successes of implementing and using geographic information systems (GIS) to support their communities."

[Conference on Academic Library Management](#) (reference for virtual land acknowledgment)