

Understanding a Land Acknowledgement

If you have attended a community event, Council meeting, Pow Wow, conference, school assembly or other public gathering in recent years, you have likely heard someone begin with a Land Acknowledgement.

Many people ask: *"Why do we do this?"*

A Land Acknowledgement is an opportunity to recognize the history of the place where we gather and the Indigenous Peoples who have cared for these lands since time immemorial. It is an expression of respect. It reminds us that the history of this land did not begin with the arrival of European settlers or the creation of Canada. Indigenous Peoples have lived, travelled, gathered, hunted, fished, cared for, and celebrated on these lands for countless generations.

Most importantly, it reminds us that *Indigenous Peoples are still here today.*

More Than Words

Some people think a Land Acknowledgement is simply something that is read at the beginning of a meeting. It is much more than that.

A Land Acknowledgement is an opportunity to pause, reflect, and recognize the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the land. When spoken sincerely, it helps build understanding, respect, and stronger relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Every Community is Different

There is no single Land Acknowledgement that is used across Canada. Every Indigenous Nation has its own history, language, traditions, and relationship with its traditional territory.

For this reason, Land Acknowledgements should reflect the community where they are being shared. Whenever possible, organizations are encouraged to work with the local Indigenous Nation to ensure their acknowledgement is accurate and meaningful.

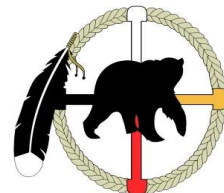
The Township of Central Frontenac Land Acknowledgement

In 2026, the Township of Central Frontenac worked collaboratively with Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation to develop a Land Acknowledgement that reflects our shared history and the enduring relationship between the Algonquin Nation and these lands.

It reads:

"We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Nation. In particular we recognize the enduring presence and stewardship of the Indigenous Peoples and honour their connections to the lands and waters within Central Frontenac."

Let's take a closer look at what those words mean.



"We would like to begin..."

Beginning a gathering with a Land Acknowledgement sets the tone for the meeting or event. It reminds us that every place has a history and that acknowledging that history is an act of respect.

"...acknowledging that the land on which we gather..."

The land beneath our feet is much more than a location on a map. For Indigenous Peoples, the land provides food, medicines, shelter, transportation and places for ceremony and community. It is deeply connected to identity, language, culture, and responsibility.

"...the traditional and unceded territory..."

Traditional territory refers to the lands that Indigenous Nations have lived on, cared for, and travelled throughout for countless generations. *Unceded* means that this land was not surrendered or given up through a treaty.

Understanding these words helps us better understand the history of the place where we live today.

"...of the Algonquin Nation."

The Algonquin People have called this region home since time immemorial. Today, Algonquin communities continue to preserve their language, culture, traditions and connection to these lands and waters.

Land Acknowledgements recognize that Indigenous Nations are living communities with vibrant cultures that continue to grow and evolve.

"In particular we recognize the enduring presence..."

These words remind us that Indigenous Peoples are not simply part of history. They continue to live, govern, teach, celebrate, create, raise families and contribute to communities throughout this region.

The relationship between Indigenous Peoples and these lands continues today.

"...and stewardship of the Indigenous Peoples..."

For thousands of years, Indigenous Peoples cared for these lands and waters using knowledge that was passed from one generation to the next. Stewardship means accepting the responsibility to care for the land, waters, plants, animals, and all living things so they may continue to sustain future generations.

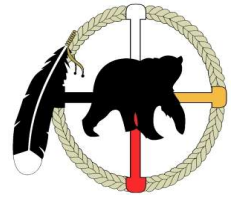
"...and honour their connections to the lands and waters within Central Frontenac."

Land and water cannot be separated. The lakes, rivers, forests, wetlands, and wildlife have always been part of the lives, traditions, and identity of the Algonquin People.

These connections continue today and remain an important part of Indigenous culture and community.

Who Should Give a Land Acknowledgement?

Many people believe that an Indigenous person should always deliver the Land Acknowledgement. In fact, it is often most meaningful when it is shared by the host organization. Doing so demonstrates that the organization has taken the time to learn about the history of the land and wishes to recognize that relationship.



If an Elder or Knowledge Keeper is invited to offer an Opening Prayer or welcome, that is a separate cultural role and should not be confused with a Land Acknowledgement.

Beyond the Words

A Land Acknowledgement is not an end in itself. It is the beginning of a relationship. Learning about Indigenous history. Building friendships. Supporting Indigenous communities. Listening with respect. Creating opportunities to learn from one another. These are all meaningful ways we can continue the journey of reconciliation.

A Final Thought

A Land Acknowledgement is not about looking to the past. It is about recognizing the past, respecting the present, and building a better future together. When spoken sincerely and followed by meaningful action, it becomes much more than words. It becomes a promise to continue learning, listening, and walking together in a good way.

Miigwetch for taking the time to learn about the history of the lands and waters we all share. Every conversation that begins with respect helps build a stronger relationship for future generations.