

County of Huron

Land Acknowledgment User Guide

Photo: Eagle Flight performing at the Huron Historic Gaol



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Contributor Acknowledgment

The County of Huron is not an expert on Land Acknowledgment. Many voices (including Indigenous voices), perspectives, and experiences have contributed to the creation of this document and Land Acknowledgment statement. The County of Huron acknowledges and thanks these many contributors.

This User Guide is not comprehensive or wholly inclusive and we are currently welcoming feedback from Indigenous community members, and staff, as well as feedback from non-Indigenous people on how helpful they found the Guide, and its navigation.

This is a living document that will be enriched by continued feedback and conversations.

To offer feedback on the content of this document, contact: communications@huroncounty.ca

What is a Land Acknowledgment?

A land or territorial acknowledgment is the recognition of Indigenous peoples and cultures on their traditional lands that we stand on today. It also reflects upon Indigenous marginalization given the historical and ongoing systemic issues faced by Indigenous peoples. It is a primary step towards reconciliation as it prompts a level of reflection necessary for settlers to frame themselves within the context of the land we occupy and the realities of Indigenous people today.

Reconciliation is an ongoing process where we learn, adapt, and grow. For this reason, as we strengthen our relationship with Indigenous people and learn from past mistakes, this document, including the Land Acknowledgment, guidelines for use, and accompanying resources, is subject to change if/when more information becomes available.

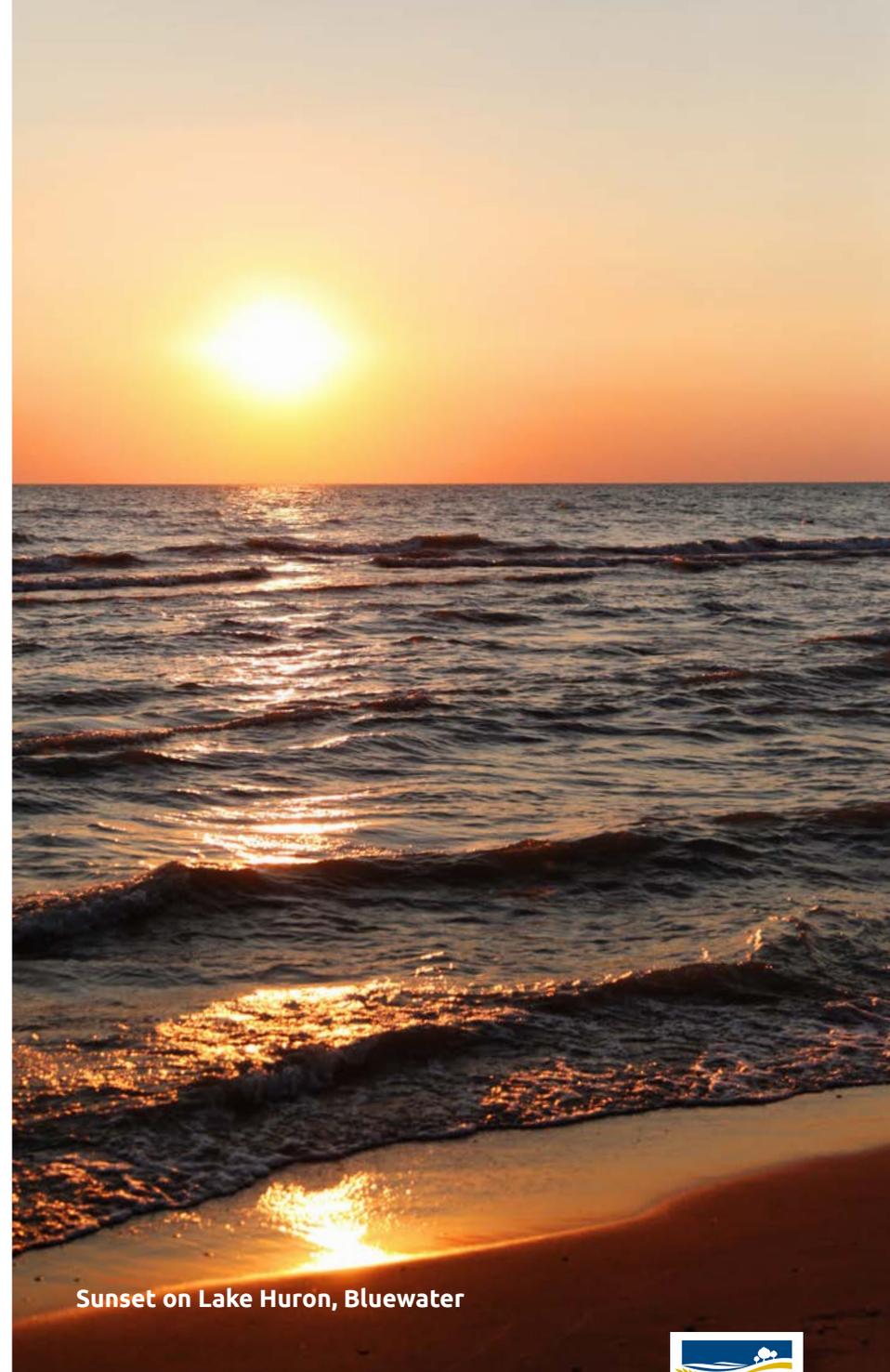


Maitland River & Mennesetung Bridge in Autumn, Goderich

When should you offer a Land Acknowledgment?

Verbal Land Acknowledgments are encouraged at the beginning of every meeting, event, public ceremony, or professional gathering.

Land Acknowledgments should also be written and posted in physical and online spaces for public and organizational viewing. This includes on buildings, walls, and rooms associated with the County of Huron as well as shared documents like meeting agendas, guides, presentations, publications, etc. You may also offer a short version of the Land Acknowledgment in your email signature.

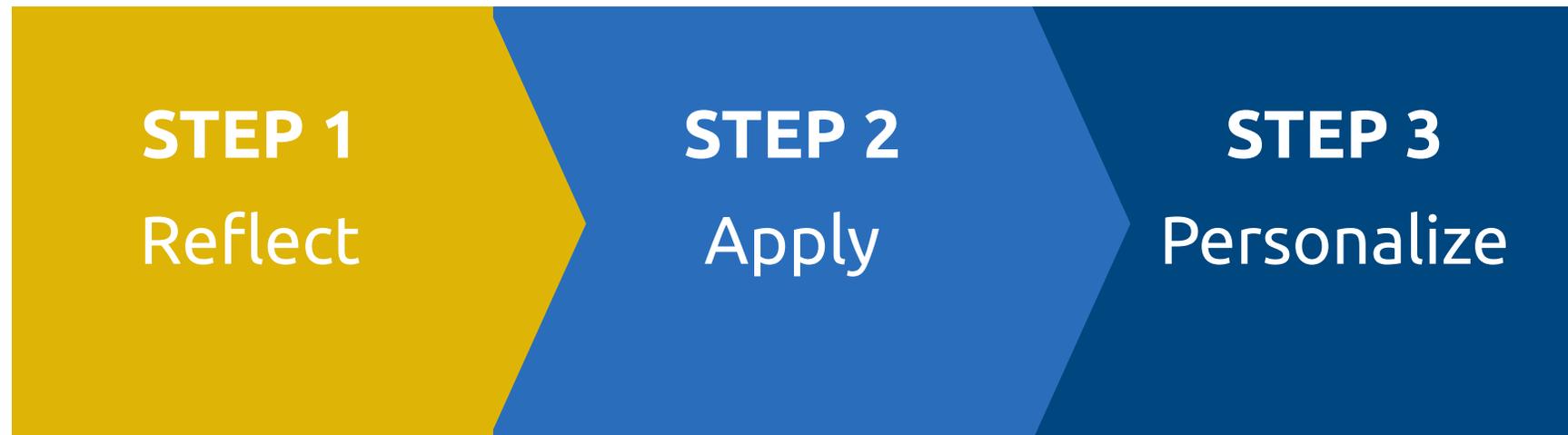


Sunset on Lake Huron, Bluewater

How to deliver a Land Acknowledgment

Delivering a Land Acknowledgment is more than a procedure or a recital. It's about taking necessary time to reflect on your relationship with the land, honour Indigenous communities, and think critically about tangible ways you can move forward reconciliation.

It's a process that we can view in three steps:



Step 1: Reflection

Before offering a Land Acknowledgment it is imperative to reflect on your relationship with the land, your knowledge of Indigenous issues, and how you might be able to further reconciliation and decolonization efforts in your personal and professional life.

Prior to implementing the Huron County Land Acknowledgment Statement, take a few moments for quiet reflection.

You can ask yourself questions such as:

- Why are you doing this land acknowledgment?
- What do you know about the history of the land and related treaties of which you occupy? Should you try to learn more?
- What do you know about current events and legacies, such as Land Back, water security, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Treaties, and policies such as the Indian Act? Should you try to learn more?
- Who are you in relation to the land (for example, a settler or an immigrant)?



Agriculture in Spring, ACW

Step 2: Apply Land Acknowledgment

Land Acknowledgments should be applied routinely in both written and verbal formats.

Before offering a verbal Land Acknowledgment, take the time to practice pronunciations and select a version to read based on available time. The County of Huron has three Land Acknowledgment statements to choose from. The first and most thorough version is encouraged but if time is limited, you may select one of the two alternative options.

You may also listen to the pronunciation of traditional Indigenous territories' names on the County's webpage: [HuronCounty.ca/about/land-acknowledgement](https://www.huroncounty.ca/about/land-acknowledgement)

Or use this pronunciation guide:

Anishinaabe: (A-nish-in-ah-bay)

Haudenosaunee: (Hode-en-o-shownee)

Land Acknowledgment Version #1

We acknowledge that the land we stand upon today is the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples and is connected to the Dish with One Spoon wampum, under which multiple nations agreed to care for the land and its resources by the Great Lakes in peace.

We also acknowledge the Upper Canada Treaties signed in regards to this land, which include Treaty #29 and Treaty #45 ½.

We recognize First Peoples' continued stewardship of the land and water as well as the historical and ongoing injustices they face in Canada. We accept responsibility as a public institution and as treaty people to renew relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people through reconciliation, community service, and respect.

Land Acknowledgment Version #2

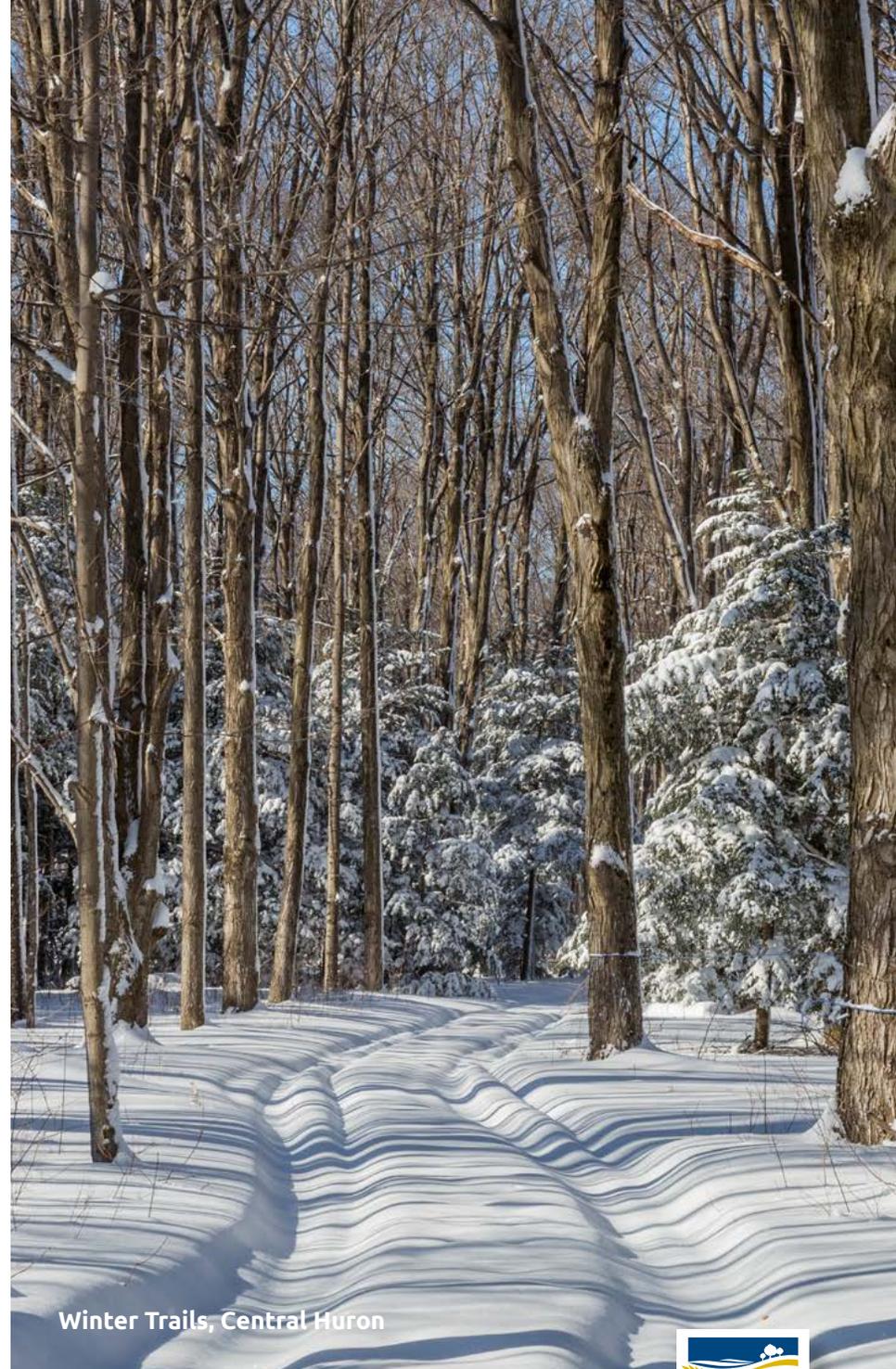
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We recognize First peoples' continued stewardship of the land and water and accept responsibility as a public institution and as treaty people to renew relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people through reconciliation, community service, and respect.

Land Acknowledgment Version #3

We acknowledge that the land we stand upon today is the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples and is connected to the Dish with One Spoon wampum.

We recognize First peoples' continued stewardship of the land and water and accept responsibility as a public institution to renew respectful relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people through reconciliation and community service.



Winter Trails, Central Huron

Step 3: Personalization

After you have recited the County's Land Acknowledgment Statement, it is encouraged that you also offer a verbal personal reflection on the themes of the statement.

Some prompts you should feel free to use:

- What is your relationship with the land? i.e. How do you personally use, preserve, save, benefit from, acknowledge the resources of the land?
- As a member of a government organization, how can you leverage your institutional power for reconciliation?
- Speak to past and present histories of oppression and colonialism, and how these have affected local Indigenous communities, as well as how this history relates to your own lived experiences.
- What actions do you plan to take to further reconciliation and decolonization (education, action efforts, policy, marches, programming, etc.).

The personalized part of your Land Acknowledgment should be reflective, honest, sincere and can be conversational in tone. **Do not use the statement to commit to actions you do not intend to take.**

Examples of personalized statements:

"As a settler on this land, I must admit I didn't know much about Indigenous history. I didn't learn much about it in school nor have I remained up to date with the much of the very serious and grave issues Indigenous Peoples face today. I wish I had been taught more in school, and that is a failure of my education system. I also wish I knew more today in my adulthood, but that is my own shortcoming.

To further reconciliation in my own life, I commit to listen critically, read more credible resources and news on Indigenous life, and access Indigenous organizations in my community to request to volunteer in my spare time."

Or

"I recognize that I have shortcomings in my awareness and understanding of Indigenous topics. I acknowledge that I have a personal role to play in Canada's reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. To do my part, I am actively seeking out credible information and learning more about Indigenous people, history, and culture with the intent of applying that knowledge to my work, in my home, and in my community. Truth and reconciliation matters to me."

Resources

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: 94 Calls to Action

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524494530110/1557511412801>

Ontario: Maps & Treaty information

ontario.ca/page/map-ontario-treaties-and-reserves#t23

Treaties and Huron County: The Huron County Museum

huroncountymuseum.ca/treaties-huron-county/

Interactive treaty maps

native-land.ca/

Western University Land Acknowledgement

indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/land-acknowledgement.html

City of Toronto Land Acknowledgement

toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/indigenous-affairs-office/land-acknowledgement/

A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment

nativegov.org/news/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/

Territory Acknowledgement

native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement/

Beyond territorial acknowledgments

apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/

David Suzuki Foundation | What is Land Back?

davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/what-is-land-back/

Permanent Astonishment:

A Memoir by Thomson Highway

Available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) and other booksellers

Land Back by NDN

landback.org

How do I write my own Land Acknowledgment?

The County of Huron is not an expert on Land Acknowledgment, nor do we claim authority, or expertise, in the history of this territory, or it's Original Peoples.

To understand more context around the meaning of Land Acknowledgments, including how to write your own, feel free to engage with all the resources included in this document and build conversation with local Indigenous communities, organizations, and scholars near you.