

# Letter to all chapter boards and sector groups from Lindsay Drake Nightingale

**Date sent:** February 12, 2022

The Landscape Ontario Board of Directors wanted to share with you information about an important topic raised at the Provincial Board of Directors meeting on February 8. Following discussion at the AGM earlier in the day, a motion was made for the association to adopt the Indigenous land stewardship statement as presented at the 2022 Awards of Excellence for future Landscape Ontario hosted events.

Here is the statement that was presented at the beginning of the awards presentation (replay available to watch on demand - <https://loawards.com/>):

*Landscape Ontario recognizes that its work and the work of its community partners take place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province.*

*We acknowledge that there are 46 treaties and other agreements that cover the territory now called Ontario. We are thankful to be able to work and live in these territories.*

*We are thankful to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people who have cared for these territories since time immemorial and who continue to contribute to the strength of Ontario and to all communities across the province.*

Board members in favour of the motion believe the association should make these statements as part of a much larger diversity, inclusion, and belonging strategy. Some suggested that if we don't articulate our inclusiveness, we are standing for the opposite.

Other board members expressed the opinion that the association should stand by the diversity, inclusion and belonging statement that was passed by the board at a previous meeting. Their view was that when one group is singled out, there is a risk that others will feel excluded.

This is the inclusivity statement that has already been passed by the LO Board of Directors:

*Landscape Ontario is a not for profit, volunteer-driven trade association. Dedicated to the advancement of the landscape/horticultural profession. We strive to ensure that we are a*

*collaborative and inclusive organization where people of all genders, races, religions, nationalities, cultures, sexual orientations, languages, and abilities are welcomed and can feel comfortable, respected, and valued.*

Another view was that by making statements that can be viewed as political, the association could polarize the community and alienate some members.

Ultimately, a motion to table the initial motion until members of the Board of Directors have an opportunity to discuss the issue with their respective chapters and sectors groups was passed. The original motion will be voted on at the April Board of Directors meeting.

As LO Board members, Chapter Board, and Sector Group leadership you have been asked to bring this respective discussion to your next Chapter board and Sector Group to provide direction to your LO Board representative. The minutes of your meeting should capture the result of your discussion.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Drake Nightingale  
Landscape Ontario President  
Yorkshire Garden Services Inc

The motion made at the LO Board of Directors meeting on February 8, 2022 that was tabled so that chapter boards and sector groups had the opportunity to discuss and vote:

**MOTION:** Landscape Ontario endorses a land acknowledgement similar to the one said at the 2022 Awards of Excellence, to be said at our AGMs, Board meetings and with the ability for the Chapter and Sector groups to take it up as they see fit. This motion was presented at the April 2022 Board of Directors meeting and was carried with a majority vote.

# Appendix: Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Resources

March 8, 2022

## What are Traditional Land Acknowledgement Statements?

Traditional land acknowledgement statements are a reminder that we all must continue to strengthen the relationships and understanding between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples. Traditional land acknowledgements are increasingly being used in Canada by governments, schools, post-secondary institutions, non-governmental organizations, and other civil institutions as a practice of reconciliation aimed at recognizing the traditional or treaty territories of Indigenous peoples. The statements are typically made at the introduction of meetings, gatherings, events, or presentations. Some are featured on organization websites or event description pages. They are commonly modeled after Indigenous protocols.

## Resources:

**Treaties in Ontario** - Treaties are legally binding agreements that set out the rights, responsibilities and relationships of First Nations and the federal and provincial governments.  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/treaties>

**National Centre for Truth & Reconciliation** - The NCTR was created as part of the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The TRC was charged to listen to Survivors, their families, communities and others affected by the residential school system and educate Canadians about their experiences. The resulting collection of statements, documents and other materials now forms the sacred heart of the NCTR.  
<https://nctr.ca/records/reports/#trc-reports>

**Government of Canada** - The Government of Canada is renewing the relationship with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation based on the recognition of rights, respect and partnership. Learn more about the work the Department of Justice is doing to renew the relationship and support Indigenous communities as they shape their own futures.  
<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/ijr-dja/index.html>

**Legal Aid Ontario** - Legal Aid Ontario recognizes that its work, and the work of its community partners take place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province. We acknowledge that there are 46 treaties and other agreements that cover the territory now called Ontario. We are thankful to be able to work and live in these territories. We are thankful to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people who have cared for these territories since time immemorial and who continue to contribute to the strength of Ontario and to all communities across the province. LAO is

honoured to collaborate with Indigenous clients, stakeholders and communities throughout the various territories.

<https://www.legalaid.on.ca/land-acknowledgement/>

**Association of Municipalities of Ontario** - This resource was developed by AMO's recently created Indigenous Relations Task Force. Members have requested supports on creating a traditional land acknowledgement statement for their municipal government. The intention of this resource is therefore to provide guidance to interested municipal governments on how to draft a statement for their jurisdiction.

<https://www.amo.on.ca/advocacy/indigenous-relations/guidance-traditional-land-acknowledgement-statements>

**Indigenous Bar Association** - The overarching purpose of these statements, since at least the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, has been to foster recognition of Indigenous history and honour the past, present, and future contributions of Indigenous peoples to what is now known as Canada. While part of the aim of land acknowledgements is to recognize the historical oppression of Indigenous peoples by institutions of colonial power, as well as how that oppression has influenced relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, they also recognize accepted facts. Namely that, in the words of the Supreme Court of Canada, "Aboriginal peoples were here when Europeans came, and were never conquered."

<https://indigenousbar.ca/indigenous-bar-association-in-canada-responds-to-statements-regarding-indigenous-land-acknowledgements-in-courtrooms/>

**Government of Ontario - The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples** - Ontario is working with Indigenous partners to address the legacy of residential schools, close gaps and remove barriers, support Indigenous culture, and reconcile relationships with Indigenous peoples. Ontario will invest more than \$250 million over the next three years on programs and actions focused on reconciliation, which will be developed and evaluated in close partnership with our Indigenous partners.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/journey-together-ontarios-commitment-reconciliation-indigenous-peoples>

**CBC - 'I regret it': Hayden King on writing Ryerson University's territorial acknowledgement** -

Territorial acknowledgements have become common in many spaces. You hear them at the beginning of events, in speeches, during school and even at hockey games. But there's growing tension about the politics of territorial acknowledgements. Are they emptied of meaning as they become more commonplace? Hayden King helped write Ryerson University's territorial acknowledgement in 2012, but now he regrets it.

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/redrawing-the-lines-1.4973363/i-regret-it-hayden-king-on-writing-ryerson-university-s-territorial-acknowledgement-1.4973371>

**CBC - What is the significance of acknowledging the Indigenous land we stand on?** - "It certainly isn't enough but it is a necessary first step," said Norman. "It needs to be the beginning of a learning process." Norman said for people who want to take steps to reconciliation, the acknowledgement should lead to more questions about who the people listed in the acknowledgement are and how their land came to be possessed by settlers.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/territorial-acknowledgements-indigenous-1.4175136>

**APTN News - Questioning the usefulness of land acknowledgements.** Land acknowledgements have been growing in popularity in the past 10 years to the point they're now at most events or gatherings. But while they're common, some question if they're useful in reconciliation or simply superficial platitudes meant to give the illusion of honour and respect for indigenous land and nations.

<https://www.aptnnews.ca/infocus/questioning-the-usefulness-of-land-acknowledgements/>

**CBC - What is wrong with land acknowledgements** - 5 First Nations people weigh in with their thoughts, advice and expectations. In an era of reconciliation, they're political statements meant to recognize First Nations, Inuit, and Métis territory, however many Indigenous people argue they've grown to become superficial, performative – and problematic.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/land-acknowledgments-what-s-wrong-with-them-1.6217931>

**The Conversation - Six Nations Land Defenders in Caledonia reveal hypocrisy of Canada's land acknowledgements** - The disputes between Haldimand County, Ontario and Haudenosaunee Six Nations activists highlight these land acknowledgements. How effective are they to remind citizens of Canada's colonial history and of the history of Indigenous-settler relations?

<https://theconversation.com/six-nations-land-defenders-in-caledonia-reveal-hypocrisy-of-canadas-land-acknowledgements-145158>

**Toronto Star - County council told it should deliver land acknowledgment every two years for now** - COUNTY OF WELLINGTON - The county's Indigenous Advisory Committee chair is recommending a land acknowledgement should be delivered every other year. The update was delivered by the Indigenous Advisory Committee chair at the county council's final meeting of 2021 on Thursday.

<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/12/06/county-council-told-it-should-deliver-land-acknowledgment-every-two-years-for-now.html>

**Native Governance Centre** - Native Governance Center held an event on moving beyond land acknowledgment on August 25, 2021. The event featured Nikki Pitre (Center for Native American Youth), Joye Braun (Indigenous Environmental Network), President Robert Larsen (Lower Sioux Indian Community), and Michelle Vassel and David Cobb (Wiyot Honor Tax). This guide is based on content contributed during our event; we are grateful to our presenters for sharing their wisdom with us.

<https://nativegov.org/news/beyond-land-acknowledgment-guide/>

**City of Toronto: Land Acknowledgement Guide** - City of Toronto staff and partners can use this document to guide their practice and actions around the Land Acknowledgement. This is considered a first step, done to acknowledge and honour the First Peoples that have lived here for thousands of years, and the enduring presence of Indigenous Persons in the area for time immemorial.

<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/90c6-2019-Land-Acknowledgment-Guidance.pdf>

**Ontario Association of Landscape Architects** - Outreach: The power of reconciliation - Landscape Architecture programs and professional practice alike are critically under-represented by Indigenous peoples.

[https://www.oala.ca/ground\\_articles/outreach/](https://www.oala.ca/ground_articles/outreach/)

**American Society of Landscape Architecture** - New Program Designed to Address Systemic Inequities in the Profession of Landscape Architecture

<https://dirt.asla.org/2022/02/23/new-program-designed-to-address-systemic-inequities-in-the-profession-of-landscape-architecture/>

**Alberta Law Society** - Indigenous Land Acknowledgements

<https://www.lawsociety.ab.ca/about-us/key-initiatives/indigenous-initiatives/indigenous-land-acknowledgements/>

**Canadian Bar Association** - truth and reconciliation toolkit for legal firms

<https://www.cba.org/Truth-and-Reconciliation/Reconciliation-Toolkit-for-Firms>

**Beyond 94 - is a CBC initiative that measures the progress of the Truth and**

**Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action** - The site provides up-to-date status reports on each call to action, as well as extensive summaries explaining those status reports. It includes in-depth features and short video documentaries that tell some of the community stories behind the calls to action. It also features residential school survivors sharing their experiences.

<https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=1>

**Centennial College** - Indigenous Studies Text

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/indigstudies/>

**Government of Canada - Delivering on Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action** -

Learn how the Government of Canada is responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. To redress the legacy of residential schools and advance reconciliation, in its final report the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada called on governments, educational and religious institutions, civil society groups and all Canadians to take

action on the 94 Calls to Action it identified. On December 15, 2015, the Prime Minister reiterated the Government of Canada's commitment to implement the recommendations of the commission.

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

**Video - Indigenous Land Acknowledgements (American)** - Dr. Anton Treuer shares about Indigenous Land Acknowledgements—what they are, why they are important, what a good land acknowledgement will include and avoid, and how to develop a sound process for developing one for your organization or institution.

- About Dr. Anton Treuer - <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/directory/facstaff/wj2863th/>

 Indigenous Land Acknowledgements

**Native Land Digital** - Native Land Digital strives to create and foster conversations about the history of colonialism, Indigenous ways of knowing, and settler-Indigenous relations, through educational resources such as our map and Territory Acknowledgement Guide. We strive to go beyond old ways of talking about Indigenous people and to develop a platform where Indigenous communities can represent themselves and their histories on their own terms. In doing so, Native Land Digital creates spaces where non-Indigenous people can be invited and challenged to learn more about the lands they inhabit, the history of those lands, and how to actively be part of a better future going forward together.

<https://native-land.ca/>

**First Light - Relearning, recentering, returning at the speed of trust** - Land Acknowledgements Pros and Cons. First Light is a bridge between conservation organizations and Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet and Mi'kmaq Communities who seek to expand Wabanaki access and relationship to land. We aspire to reciprocity: our goal is to expand Wabanaki access and relationship to land for prosperity and to create a stronger conservation movement that includes and reflects Indigenous expertise and perspective. All will benefit from this, and it all begins with the land.

<https://firstlightlearningjourney.net/land-acknowledgements/>

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