



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT GUIDELINES



FEBRUARY 2024

In July 2020, the Tamarack Board of Directors and staff team published a formal statement identifying that we would be initiating a learning journey deepening their practices around anti-racism, reconciliation, and justice.

We Want to Be Part of the Solution affirmed that “that systemic racism is very real and prevalent across our country. As an organization and as individuals we recognize that we are part of and have benefited from said system. We want to change this, to become an organization that strives to be anti-racist and that takes action to end systemic racism. The Board and Staff of Tamarack have committed to take a learning and change journey. Our efforts will focus on understanding the roots of racism and building an approach to change and transform how we work”.

As part of our continuing commitment to achieving justice and equity for all, we have collaborated with Indigenous community leaders to develop the following guidelines for both staff and board members in support of the practice of acknowledging the ancestral lands where we are situated in present-day.

We believe that for a Land Acknowledgement to be meaningful, we should each learn the history of the lands and first peoples where their home office is located. This can be done through research, community-based learning, peer discussions and in conversation with Indigenous-led organizations and community leaders.

Staff should also become familiar with the Indian Act of 1876, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada as well as read and understand the 94 Calls to Action and the 231 Calls for Justice developed through the National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit.

There are numerous guides and publications that exist to demonstrate meaningful ways of developing and delivering a land acknowledgement. The following resources and readings are a few recommended ones to offer guidance, learn more about the Indigenous histories of the land, and to support the creation and recitation of your own personalized land acknowledgement:

- Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide to Writing By and About Indigenous People
- Guidance for Honouring the Land and Ancestors through Land Acknowledgements – Canadian Association for Mental Health Reconciliation Working Group
- Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples and Traditional Territory – Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)
- Native Land - Territory Acknowledgment
- Whose Land – Web based platform created in partnership with NativeLand.ca
- Native Governance Center - Beyond Land Acknowledgment Guide
- RAVEN Trust – Land Acknowledgements: From Recitation, to Real
- National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: 94 Calls to Action
- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2Spirit (MMIWG2S)

Guidelines for Land Acknowledgements – Personal and Organizational Practice

Land acknowledgements and personal reflection statements are an opportunity for us, as individuals and as members of the Tamarack team, to affirm our commitment to the history, promises and problem-solving surrounding the truth and reconciliation process. The reflection and acknowledgement practice represents for each of us an opportunity to learn more about the history of Turtle Island and the roles we hold in colonialism, racism, and injustice and their implications in the contemporary context. It also serves as an opportunity for each of us to reflect on how we can use our institutional power to move forward the needle of reconciliation and shed light on historical injustices.

A Land Acknowledgment will be included:

- On the Tamarack website
- On our email signatures
- In Tamarack newsletters and other public facing documents
- At the opening of workshops, webinars, communities of practice and other public events
- On job postings and Requests for Proposals

Tamarack staff and board members are invited to:

- Take the time to learn the correct pronunciation of the Indigenous Nations and communities they are acknowledging.
- Spend time reflecting on the acknowledgement prior to a meeting or event so that they are not reading from a script but rather speaking with intention and from the heart.
- Take the time needed to appropriately and respectfully acknowledge the land they are on and the first peoples who stewarded it; this is a process and should not be rushed.
- Align their Land Acknowledgement with an appropriate call to action and/or commitment to equity ie. Setting aside pre-determined number of sponsored tickets for Indigenous learners attending a specific event
- Beyond acknowledgements, work to build deep and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people, communities, and Indigenous-led organizations.

Reflective questions that Tamarack staff and board members should reflect on include*:

- Why acknowledge territory? How to acknowledge territory?
- 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?
- What are you, or your organization, doing beyond acknowledging the territory where you live, work, or hold your events?
- What might you be doing that perpetuates settler colonial futurity rather than considering alternative ways forward for Canada?

*questions sourced from [Native-Land.ca](https://www.native-land.ca)

Land Acknowledgements at Tamarack gatherings

Tamarack will include a Land Acknowledgement at in-person and virtual gatherings and events. Tamarack staff will seek to develop an understanding of the history of the community where the event is being held, or their own community and share their knowledge at the gathering or event. Where there are gaps in self-directed research, Tamarack staff may wish to seek historical information from Traditional Councils, Tribe/Band Councils, Indigenous Friendship Centres, or cultural education centres. Indigenous peoples, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and community members at-large should not be relied upon to conduct a Land Acknowledgement.

Opening remarks, welcoming and prayers at Tamarack gatherings

At significant events and gatherings Tamarack staff should invite local Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and community leaders to open with remarks to welcome the group in the form of a greeting or prayer.

To ensure this is done in a meaningful way, it's imperative that this portion of the event is centered and intentionally planned into the design of the gathering. Creating this space is one way that we follow through in our commitment to truth & reconciliation and is an opportunity for all to learn local customs and protocols of community hosting.

Tamarack staff will discuss protocol including honoraria as a form of gratitude with invitees before making a formal invitation. Translation of the opening remarks from local-Indigenous languages, French or English will be taken into consideration when considering the honoraria amount.

The opening remarks led by an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or community leader at any gathering should not be rushed and permission to record the opening should be discussed in advance. Tamarack staff should allocate sufficient time to the opening remarks or prayers by having this conversation with those involved. A minimum of at least 30 minutes should be allocated. This will serve as an opportunity for attendees to ground themselves in the space, truly acknowledge the land through the lens of the speaker and can help to clear minds that may be experiencing complex feelings. The opening remarks can help bring a sense of calm to the group as they realize their place in creation, which can lead to active listening and mindful decision-making.



Tamarack workshops, webinars and Communities of Practice

Land Acknowledgements are not meant to be scripted, and when done in this way they risk becoming a performative gesture rather than a genuine reflection to ground and shape conversations. To be considered meaningful, a Land Acknowledgement should include an active reflection by the Tamarack team member and how this relates to the meeting, event or work of Tamarack overall.

It is important to acknowledge land and history whether in-person or virtually. Tamarack staff are invited to reference the below examples as a starting point to develop their own personalized Land Acknowledgement. While it is important to recognize that many of us are situated on Turtle Island staff are invited to include the specific land on which they are joining from, which might include travels between lands. In addition to an acknowledgement, staff are invited to share a personal reflection about their commitments to truth and reconciliation as it relates to their journey.

Examples of ways to acknowledge the land

We begin this workshop by acknowledging that we are meeting on Indigenous land. We are grateful for the opportunity to meet, and we thank all the generations of Indigenous peoples who have stewarded and continue to care for this land.

The recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to continuously understand the truth and make the commitment of reconciliation real in our communities.

I'm joining from the traditional land of ...

We would invite each of you to introduce yourself in the chat box, including your name, organization, and the traditional lands where you are calling in from.

A shortlist of where you might use the above statement as a starting place includes:

- Tamarack workshops
- Tamarack webinars
- Tamarack communities of practice
- Tamarack gatherings
- At the start of any new conversations

Website Land Acknowledgement

Tamarack Institute is a national organization and our staff team have offices located in communities across Turtle Island and around the globe. Our website will include the following Land Acknowledgement:

Footer

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity, and truth we honour and acknowledge that our work occurs across Turtle Island (North America), which has been the ancestral home of Indigenous peoples of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit descent.

Community Acknowledgement page

Turtle Island (North America) is the ancestral home of Indigenous peoples of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit descent. We recognize that across this land, Indigenous rights holders have endured historical oppression and continue to experience inequities that have resulted from the widespread colonialist systems and ideologies that perpetuate harm to Indigenous peoples to this day.

Email signatures

Tamarack team members will use their email signatures to acknowledge the traditional territory where their office is located. This acknowledgement will appear both in your email signature and on your staff profile on the Contact webpage on the Tamarack website. My office is located on the traditional territory of ... (see [Native Land](#) for research and reflection)

Tamarack public facing documents

For our newsletters and other key documents such as reports, articles and guides we will include a Land Acknowledgement relevant to the content within the document. For example:

Turtle Island (North America) is the ancestral home of Indigenous peoples of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit descent. We recognize that across this land Indigenous rights holders have endured historical oppression and continue to experience inequities that have resulted from the widespread colonialist systems and ideologies that perpetuate harm to Indigenous peoples to this day.

For reference, please see the [CBYF Members' Retreat Report](#). Each of the communities that were present for the retreat were reflected with their colonial names as well as their local Indigenous place names and treaties.



Acknowledgements

The first version of this document was reviewed by Elizabeth Cooper, Kayla Cross, Kahienes Sky and Niioieren Patton. We thank them for their wisdom, advice, and guidance in creating this document. Below is a comment that we received from one of the contributors about the original document.

Thank you, Tamarack, for taking this first meaningful step toward harmony among people. Dealing with change to what has been historically inaccurate but accepted can be difficult. However, approaching any issue with an open desire for truth and acknowledgement of our responsibility to one another toward the ideal of peace can be achieved. The Peacemaker brought a system of government whose foundation is based on 3 principles: first: use of a good mind/good words, second: a desire for peace and third: the strength that comes from the first 2 principles being constant.

We also express gratitude to Angelina Pelletier, Associate Director of CBYF, and Rochelle Ignacio, Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Shanese Steele, Senior Community Animator for sharing their knowledge and gifts in the 2023 review of this living document.

