

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An Indigenous Perspective



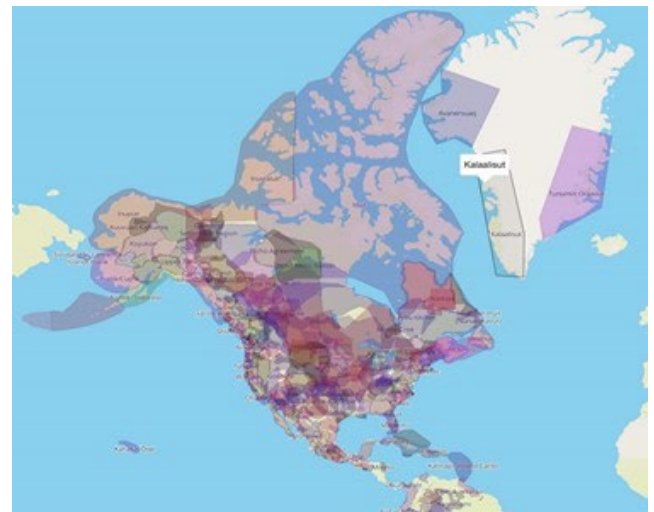
Land Acknowledgements require work. When you take the time to research, build awareness, share and educate, you are showing that you or your organization are committed to the Indigenous path forward. Acknowledgements are a small, but important step when it comes to reconciliation.

Indigenous Land (or Territorial) Acknowledgements come in many forms. When you take a moment to reflect on the Indigenous ancestral inhabitants of a place, you also acknowledge that we all have a relationship and responsibility to the land and have a meaningful role of restoring pride to the first peoples of the land. So long as your Acknowledgement is geographically accurate and motivated by genuine respect for Indigenous nations and communities, your Land Acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation.

"It recognizes the strength and wisdom of the place that has given rise to the people who are of that land and it invokes the spirit of that place to support your good intentions."

- S. Calvez., R. Roberts, 2020

There are many reliable resources created by or with input from Indigenous people on the internet. I highly recommend [Native-Land.ca](https://www.native-land.ca), an excellent interactive resource that can help you identify and research the land or territory you would like to acknowledge and offer correct pronunciation.



Opinions vary on when it is appropriate to make a Land Acknowledgement. They can also be presented both verbally and visually. You can consider working with or commissioning an Indigenous artist to help meaningfully express your Acknowledgement.

In my experience, Acknowledgements should be done at the beginning of public events, large meetings and lectures, regardless of Indigenous presence. It is also good practice to invite Indigenous Elders to offer a prayer or ceremony to start everything off in a mindful and enriched way. When it comes to smaller team meetings or engagements, I personally like to

take a moment to offer gratitude by thanking the Creator for bringing everyone together in a good way to reflect upon the work and discussions we are about to embark on.

I acknowledge that some people are still finding the courage or comfort level to ask questions. Remind yourself that it's ok and you are sharing the discomfort of Indigenous people who have been uncomfortable for a very long time. You are starting somewhere and that is always better than not putting in any effort at all.

Wela'liog (Thank you) for engaging with me on this topic and to Sobeys Inc. for creating space in the spirit of reconciliation.

Michelle Francis- Denny is Mi'kmaq from Pictou Landing First Nation, Nova Scotia and recently joined Sobeys Inc. as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Manager, Community & Indigenous Relations. Michelle has spent more than 20 years working for Indigenous communities and organizations and is passionate about community development, Indigenous awareness and reconciliation. She is a lifelong learner who completed her bachelor's degree in community Studies at Cape Breton University, is a graduate of the Coady International Institute with a Diploma in Development Leadership and is currently an MBA student in Indigenous Business Leadership at Simon Fraser University.