

SUGGESTIONS FOR OFFERING A TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Living Document

Wellbeing Waterloo Region has made a commitment to develop meaningful relationships and work toward reconciliation with local Indigenous communities. Part of this commitment includes developing resources and tools to support education with our community partners, and this territorial acknowledgment is one resource. The First Nations, Metis, Inuit Advisory and Advocacy Circle of Wellbeing Waterloo Region was consulted in the development of this territorial acknowledgment.

When/Where can Wellbeing Waterloo Region Members Offer Acknowledgements?

A Territorial acknowledgment will be offered by a designated person at the beginning of every WWR workgroup meeting, every WWR community forum, and every WWR event such as training sessions or project launches.

Preparing for the Acknowledgement – Know This Important Background Information:

Waterloo Region, including the three cities and four townships, is located on the traditional territories of the Neutral, Anishnaabe (pronounced Ah-nish-naw-bay) and Haudenosaunee (pronounced Ho-den-noh-show-nee) peoples. Waterloo Region is part of The Haldimand Tract which encompasses six miles on either side of the Grand River from the mouth near Dundalk to where it empties into Lake Erie at Port Maitland. This use of this land was promised to the Haudenosaunee Confederation on October 25, 1784 to compensate them for the loss of their lands in upstate New York when they allied with the British who were defeated in the American Revolutionary war. Today, Waterloo Region is home to Indigenous people from many distinct First Nations, as well as Métis and Inuit.

Potential Introduction

The wording of this introduction provides a context for a territorial and land acknowledgment. It may be used as is or changed to reflect personal experience and/or connections with the land and with Indigenous people in Waterloo Region.

“I would like to begin this meeting with a territorial acknowledgement. Why do we take the time to do a territorial acknowledgement? It is a way of honouring the land on which our successes have been built, and the Indigenous people who have been living on and caring for this land for thousands of years. As well, it is a longstanding protocol among Indigenous peoples that honours their spiritual connection to the land. Today we offer it as an act towards reconciliation between non-Indigenous Canadians and the Indigenous peoples of Canada.”

A Territorial Acknowledgement

“We acknowledge that the land on which we gather today is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabe and Neutral People. We acknowledge the enduring presence of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land today, their achievements and their contributions to our community. We offer this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation between Indigenous and non- Indigenous peoples of Canada”

Additional Information about Territorial and Land Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements are offered as an act of reconciliation between the people of Canada and Indigenous peoples. They signal the need to build mindfulness of our present relationship with the land and with First Peoples, and are an effort to respectfully move forward in both conversations and actions.

Cultural teachings may vary among WWR First Nations, Metis, Inuit groups. Territorial and Land Acknowledgements may be seen differently depending on the cultural group and their location and there are diverse opinions about the use of them. Wording of acknowledgments may be revised as knowledge and social situations may change over time.

What is a Territorial Acknowledgement?

- It is a statement that recognizes and respects original nations and their relationships to particular areas of land that they have been connected with for thousands of years.

What is a Land Acknowledgement?

- It is a statement that brings to mind the connection of land to human wellbeing, a reminder that we are a part of nature, dependant upon the earth for survival, and states our gratitude for all that nature provides us.

Why Do We Take the Time for Acknowledgements?

- It is important to understand the history that has brought us to reside on this land and our place in that history.

When is an Acknowledgment Offered?

- An acknowledgement is offered at the opening of meetings, ceremonies, lectures or public events.
- It is to be offered even if there may be no Indigenous individuals present.

Who Offers the Acknowledgement?

- The host of the event – and generally the non-Indigenous member of the group will offer the acknowledgement.
- The person offering the acknowledgement first introduces themselves and may include family lineage and other connections to the land and people.

How to Prepare for Offering an Acknowledgement

- Find out which groups of First Peoples are connected to the land on which the event is happening so that they can be properly acknowledged for their care of and connection to the land. (see links below)
- Practice pronouncing the names of the nations that will be acknowledged as a way of respecting those Indigenous groups and their languages.
- Seek input of a community Elder if you have further questions or if you wish to develop a land acknowledgement for your own group or workplace.

We would like to thank the members of Waterloo Region Aboriginal Academic Advisory committee (WRAAAC) who involved local First Nations, Metis and Inuit representatives and staff persons from both Waterloo Region school districts to develop the Acknowledgement that many use to this day.

For additional resources or information, refer to a community elder and/or:

- <http://waterloo2019.cansee.ca/land-acknowledgement-we-are-here/>
- <http://www.sixnations.ca/LandsResources/HaldProc.htm>
- <http://reconciliationcanada.ca/cultural-teachings-welcome-to-territory-land-acknowledgments/>
- <http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/>
- [What's with the Territorial Land Acknowledgements at Public Events?](#)
- <http://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/the-current/segment/15723250>