Land Acknowledgements

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According to the [Wisconsin Historical Society](https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS3663), " 'Wisconsin' (originally 'Meskonsing') is the English spelling of a French version of a Miami Indian name for a river that runs 430 miles through the center of our state, currently known as the Wisconsin river."

November is Native American Heritage Month or Native November, in which we recognize and celebrate the heritage of the indigenous peoples of Wisconsin and within the United States. One of the ways in which we can begin to do this is by making a land acknowledgement at the beginning of our events and programs. Land acknowledgements recognize the history of the land we are on and the people that came before us.

The purpose of the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is to serve "as a catalyst for sustainable change through individual and organizational capacity building to provide learning, living, and working environments free of discrimination, harassment, and violence." Part of our vision is to "sustain, adapt, and develop programs that provide students, audiences, and colleagues with the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed to effectively participate in an intercultural and global world." ([OEDI Website](http://www.uwex.uwc.edu/about/office-diversity-inclusion/about-oedi))

Keeping these things in mind, we want to provide you with the resources necessary to make land acknowledgements as one method of honoring the land, people, and history of Wisconsin.

**What is a Land Acknowledgement?**

"A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories." ([Know the Land](http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/)) A land acknowledgment is specific to the location it is being made in and should include the relevant information about the history of the specific location. Because of these differing histories, there is no uniform land acknowledgements. We’ve included several examples and the context in which they are used to help inform your practice. ​

**Why do we recognize the land?**

"To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory you reside on, and a way of honouring [sic] the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. It is important to understand the long standing history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. It is also work noting that acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol." ([Know the Land](http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/))

**Whose land are we on?**

Below are the Tribes we have in Wisconsin:

* Menominee Nation
* Ho Chunk Nation
* Forest County Potawatomie Nation
* Ojibwe Peoples: Bad River, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, Red Cliff, St Croix, and Sokaogon
* Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians
* Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
* Brothertown Indian Nation

To find the information about specific locations across the state of Wisconsin, please use one of these wonderful resources to look up[state maps](https://theways.org/map) or [counties/cities maps](https://wisconsinfirstnations.org/map/).

**What does a land acknowledgement statement look like?**

The following are actual statements made at the beginning of events, such as conferences. The sources are included at the end so that you can learn more about the context of each statement. We included examples here as guides to help those interested in crafting an appropriate acknowledgment.

"We acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnawbe, Haudenosaunee and Neutral peoples." ([Know the Land](http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/)​)

"We acknowledge and respect the Lekwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territories our organization works, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and the WSANEC peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day." ([Leadership Victoria](http://www.leadershipvictoria.ca/))

"QPIRG Concordia acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka people. The Kanien'kehá:ka are the keepers of the Eastern Door of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The island we call Montreal, called Tiotia:ke in the language of the Kanien'kehá:ka, has historically been a meeting place for other Indigenous nations, including the Algonquin peoples." ([QPIRG Concordia](http://www.qpirgconcordia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Annual-report-2014.pdf))

"I would like to acknowledge that this school is situated upon traditional territories. The territories include the Wendat (wen-dat), Anishinabek (ah-nish-nah-bek) Nation, the Haudenosaunee (ho-den-oh-sho-nee) Confederacy, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nations, and the Métis (may-tee) Nation. The treaty that was signed for this particular parcel of land is collectively referred to as the Toronto Purchase and applies to lands east of Brown's Line to Woodbine Avenue and north towards Newmarket. I also recognize the enduring presence of Aboriginal peoples on this land." ([Toronto District School Board​](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Elementary/Treaty%20AcknowledgementFINAL.pdf))

**Who should deliver the land acknowledgement?**

"The person giving the acknowledgement should be the host of the event or meeting themselves." ([Know the Land](http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/)​)

**When and how should we deliver a land acknowledgement?**

"Practice saying the name of the host nation out loud.

A land acknowledgment is not something you "just do" before an event. Rather it is a reflection process in which you build mindfulness and intention walking into whatever gathering you are having. It should be rooted in whose land you are honoured [sic] to stand on and should guide how you move forward in both conversations and actions." ([Know the Land](http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/)​)

Ask if you need help pronouncing a name or are unsure of what you should be saying in the statement. Do this in advance of the event, not moments before it starts.

**Where can I learn more?**

* [Indigenous Allyship: An Overview](https://issuu.com/lspirg/docs/allyship_toolkit_inside_pages_10.5x)
* [Wisconsin First Nations](https://wisconsinfirstnations.org/)
* [The Menominee Clans Story​](https://www4.uwsp.edu/museum/menomineeClans/default.aspx)
* [American Indian Curriculum Services (UW-Madison) Resources](http://www.education.wisc.edu/soe/about/resource-service-units/student-diversity-programs/american-indian-curriculum-services/external-resources)
* [WI Department of Public Instruction State Statues for American Indian Studies (Act 31)](https://dpi.wi.gov/amind/state-statues)
* [Know the Land Territories Campaign](http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/)
* [The Importance and Impotence of Native American Heritage Month (A Reparations Conversation)](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-importance-and-impotence-of-native-american_us_59fbbd67e4b09afdf01c41c4)
* [Wisconsin Tribal Histories- WPT](https://wpt.org/community/reel-to-real/collection/tribal-histories)
* [First Wisconsinites- WPR Series​](https://www.wpr.org/series/first-wisconsinites)
* [Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission​](http://www.glifwc.org/)
* [American Indian College Fund Research Repository ​](https://collegefund.org/research-and-programs/research/research_repository/)
* [UW-Madison Native November](https://www.wisc.edu/native-november/)
* [Keynote by Walter Echo-Hawk](https://diversity.wisc.edu/resources/forums/)
* [Native Appropriations](http://nativeappropriations.com/)
* [YWCA Racial Justice Summit](http://www.ywcamadison.org/site/c.cuIWLiO0JqI8E/b.8839699/k.460D/Racial_Justice_Summit_Resources.htm)
* [November is Native American Heritage Month](https://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/about/)
* [Everything you want to know about Indians but were afraid to ask](http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/812733646)
* [The Ways: Great Lakes Native Culture and Language](https://theways.org/about)
* [Native-Land.ca (Mapping project)](https://native-land.ca/)
* [What Native Americans Couldn't do before 1990s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOJbedvjUAQ)
* [National Congress of Americans Indians](http://www.ncai.org/)
* ["More than a Word"](http://morethanawordfilm.com/)
* [Top Native American Organizations to Know](http://www.diversitybestpractices.com/news-articles/top-native-american-organizations-to-know)
* [Things People Say to Native People (content warning for language)](https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/02/shit-people-say-to-natives/?mc_cid=4e56a4bfe0&mc_eid=a6535e7a85)
* ["Asegi Stories" by Qwo-Li Driskill](http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/967513609)​

To find a copy of any of these books at a library near you, click on the book's link, enter your location, and click on your preferred library from the list of results.