



Guide to Land Acknowledgements for Mainstream Sport.

No matter your role in the sport community (coach, sport professional, board member, etc.) chances are you have heard the term or discussion surrounding land acknowledgements. We hope that you have heard some at events or at meetings. Perhaps you are wondering why it is suddenly important to be saying them, how it applies to the sport realm, whether it is just another checkbox that people/organizations are ticking off in a performative manner, or if it actually makes a difference in reconciliation.

The Manitoba Aboriginal Sports & Recreation Council (MASRC) has created this guide as a starting point for learning and exploring the meaning and impact of Indigenous Land Acknowledgements. This is meant to be a starting point for you or to further your own work in the learning process that is reconciliation. We are all learning together. We have referenced already existing sources from multiple Indigenous people and organizations that have shared valuable insight and knowledge on this subject.

Why Do a Land Acknowledgement? Why Is It Important?

The article “What are land acknowledgements and why do they matter?” written by Indigenous writer Selena Mills explores these questions and is a great starting point for anyone looking to learn about land acknowledgements.

<https://locallove.ca/issues/what-are-land-acknowledgements-and-why-do-they-matter/#.X9zYr9hKiUk>

How Do We Do It?

Now that you have learned about the purpose behind a land acknowledgement, how do you go about doing it? Creating and articulating a land acknowledgement is something that requires some time and reflection in order for it to truly honour the land and the first people who have lived on and in harmony with it for thousands of years. This includes both personally and from the perspective of the sport organization you associate with.

Here are some questions to start with:

- Where am I?
- Who are we honouring?
- What treaties were signed here?
- What is a treaty?
- Are there any nations/Indigenous peoples who did not sign a treaty here (unceded territory, the Métis Nation, etc.)?
- How do we as an organization honour the importance of reconciliation? How are we taking action? Do our values reflect an understanding or a commitment to learning and doing better, particularly when it comes to the TRC Calls to Action 87-91?



“A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement” is a great read to help you along this reflection process.

<https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

Resources

The resources linked below are specific to Manitoba and are great sources of knowledge for the above questions:

- Treaty and First Nation Map:
<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100020576/1100100020578>
- Traditional First Nation Community Names:
<https://mfnerc.org/community-map/>
- Treaty Education: <http://www.trcm.ca/>
- Métis Red River Resistance:
<https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/article/red-river-resistance/>
- Métis Road Allowance:
<https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/article/road-allowance-people/>

What About the Water?

Something that is also becoming common is to acknowledge where the water we drink comes from. We acknowledge this in the light of many Indigenous communities who are living with permanent boil water advisories while other communities have easy access to clean and safe drinking water. An example of this is the city of Winnipeg’s water supply is sourced from Shoal Lake, while Shoal Lake 40 First Nation remains on boil water advisory.

What If I Do It Wrong?

In conversations with non-Indigenous people about land acknowledgement, there is always a fear of making mistakes like spelling things wrong, pronouncing something incorrectly or being called out for errors in general. It is important to remember that trying to do something while keeping in mind you are learning is always better than doing nothing at all. It is also important to remember that there are commonly multiple spellings as so many Indigenous languages have traditionally been oral languages. They weren’t written until after colonization.

It is okay to be honest and share that you are in the process of learning and not centering yourself or your organization as experts. Take any feedback you receive as an opportunity to learn more. Come talk to us at the MASRC, we are always willing and happy to help with the learning process.