

# “As Long as the Grass Grows, and the Sun Walks”<sup>1</sup>: Finding Discomfort in Land Acknowledgements

Caroline Ryan-York

Faculty of Native Studies and Education, University of Alberta

Corresponding author email: [cryanyor@ualberta.ca](mailto:cryanyor@ualberta.ca)

## ABSTRACT

We all have a shared history of Land Acknowledgements.<sup>2</sup> Settler Canadians are familiar with their use, but they may not understand their meaning. This essay stems from a collective frustration with improper Land Acknowledgments, and how they now produce more harm than good. This essay asks, what do Land Acknowledgements within Treaty 6 achieve in terms of reconciliation for Indigenous Peoples?<sup>3</sup> By looking at specific acknowledgements from organizations in Edmonton, I argue that these institutional acknowledgements are not rooted in reconciliation, but rather they are based upon false allyship with Indigenous Peoples. These rather script-like texts teach us that Land Acknowledgements have been re-imagined in a colonial view. By promoting settler discomfort within Land Acknowledgements, Canadians can begin to educate themselves on the basis of land and what the words within these acknowledgements mean for Indigenous reconciliation.

## Introduction

Land Acknowledgements within Canada today are growing in popularity and have been widely adopted throughout settler institutions; however, they may be perceived as acts of obligation, rather than as acts of reconciliation. Reconciliation in Canada has been widely known since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was founded in 2008. Their mandate is to “inform all Canadians about what happened in residential schools” and promote reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and settlers within Canada.<sup>4</sup> Recognizing Land Acknowledgements is vital for understanding the rights and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples. These acknowledgements within settler institutions become performative when they fail to contain concrete actions on reconciliation and legitimate support for Indigenous communities. By understanding these acknowledgements beyond their terms, settlers can promote reconciliation and build respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. As a non-Indigenous person, I wish to discuss how these acknowledgments given from settler institutions are problematic, as I do not

have the right nor merit to critique acknowledgements given from an Indigenous point of view. This essay discusses how the common Land Acknowledgement is inadequate for advancing meaningful reconciliation, as it fails to promote deep engagement with the ongoing impacts of colonialism.

## Historical Context

To understand how Land Acknowledgements given by settlers affect Indigenous Peoples, settlers must understand how their relations with Indigenous Peoples have historically played a large role in colonization. Treaties were created as a means to peacefully coexist with one another and as Indigenous scholar Neal McLeod writes, were “premised on the founding principle of coming to a shared understanding of the relationship between Indigenous and settler populations.”<sup>5</sup> Treaty Six is described to be involved with “the Nehiyawak and the Saulteaux and covers much of the central areas of Saskatchewan and

Alberta.”<sup>6</sup> Resistance from the British Crown was prevalent within Treaty Six. McLeod explains how “the chiefs were cognizant that they were struggling for the very survival of their people.”<sup>7</sup> Canadians primarily view the treaties as written methods of alliance. In contrast, the Nehiyawak peoples of Treaty Six view the treaties as an oral method of consciousness.<sup>8</sup> Specifically, the Nehiyawak peoples remember the treaties to be good as long as “the grass grows, and as long as the sun walks.”<sup>9</sup> Treaties were signed as a means to allow for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, known as settlers, to live together and share the land that was originally occupied by Indigenous Peoples.

Treaty Six is a sacred relationship; this is one of the three main themes that Kelsey Wrightson of the University of Victoria recognizes in *We Are Treaty Peoples: The Common Understanding of Treaty 6 and Contemporary Treaty in British Columbia*. The following themes are Longevity, Ceded, and Surrender vs. Sharing.<sup>10</sup> There was a shared understanding for the negotiations of treaties. Indigenous Peoples and settlers alike had to recognize the importance of engaging within the sanctity of treaty relationships.<sup>11</sup> Due to this understanding, it was believed by the Peoples of Treaty Six that the Treaty would be grounded in certainty. As Wrightson explains, “given that Treaty was understood to be a binding compact by both parties, the longevity of the Treaty was never in question for the Elders.”<sup>12</sup> The exact words used explained that “As long as his spirit, the sun, and the river, as long as these two things are moving, that is how long the promises are good for.”<sup>13</sup> The longevity was without question, but the final idea of ceding and surrender versus land sharing comes into question. Wrightson tells us that “Treaty 6 relies heavily on the two principles of equality of standing and certainty in order to understand the nature of the relationship.”<sup>14</sup> The definitions of equality and certainty differed for settler and Indigenous relations while these treaties were being negotiated. Land selling was an unknown practice for Indigenous communities; additionally, these definitions are different due to the prominent language barrier that Indigenous and settler people experienced— or that settlers used to their advantage. Wrightson argues that the “root of this cross-cultural misunderstanding is based in the assertion that the practice or concept of selling the land was unknown to Indigenous cultural experiences at that time of Treaty.”<sup>15</sup> Indigenous Peoples of Treaty Six knew what it meant to sell land, and that they did not want this to happen. For example, Wrightson explains that in the 1870s, Cree Chief, Sweet Grass, “approached negotiators as early as 1870, saying ‘I shake hands with you, and bid you welcome. We heard our lands were sold and we did not like it; we don’t want to sell

out lands; it is our property, and no one has a right to sell them.”<sup>16</sup> From this, settlers can begin to understand what Treaty Six means to Indigenous Peoples and settlers, as it is commonly misunderstood in the modern day. If these treaties are significant and focus on the idea of longevity, one would think settlers on treaty land would acknowledge this. If anything, the longevity of misunderstanding has persisted into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Modern Day Land Acknowledgements

Today, many settlers would not know that they reside on treaty land if Land Acknowledgements were not in place. Land Acknowledgements can be seen as formal statements that recognize Indigenous Peoples residing on a certain area of land, and often aim to respect the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. However, while these acknowledgements are successful in stating the location and nations of Treaty 6, settlers need to unpack the question of what exactly this is achieving. Some view Land Acknowledgements in settler institutions as mainly a form of performative activism, which do not play any active role in reconciliation. Lila Asher, an Environmental Studies student at the University of Toronto, discusses the settler understanding of acknowledgments in *The Limits of Settlers’ Territorial Acknowledgments*. Asher tells us that “territorial acknowledgments are often practiced merely because of a vague interest in supporting Indigenous groups, or even pressure to be politically correct.”<sup>17</sup> When acknowledgements are rooted in such motives, we often see mindless territorial remarks, backed with empty words that promise reconciliation. There is little history behind these words, nor are they commonly understood by the speakers themselves. Asher explains how this is harmful as it is an unconscious way of maintaining *terra nullius*, which is the “myth that settlers found empty land available to them, rather than a richly populated continent with diverse, vibrant, place-based cultures.”<sup>18</sup> Asher explains the significance that comes from naming the nations on treaty land as “naming the Indigenous nation(s) that have long ties to the place and recounting a bit of the historical relationship between those nations and Euro-western settlers.”<sup>19</sup> Colonialism permeates through settler Land Acknowledgments as settlers do not wish to come to terms with their role in land dispossession. However, to break away from this settler guilt, settlers must learn to be uncomfortable when giving acknowledgements. As previously discussed, Land Acknowledgements can often be recited routinely, without truly engaging with the deeper history and impact of

colonialism. A more thoughtful Land Acknowledgement should challenge us and evoke a sense of discomfort. Asher argues that “discomfort has educative value in that it made people aware, on a regular basis, of their precarious claim to space on Turtle Island, as well as their awareness of their ignorance about Indigenous people and settler colonial histories.”<sup>20</sup>

If there is a space where discomfort is effective in an educational setting, it should be when Land Acknowledgements are given. The acknowledgements often do not leave the room that they are being spoken in; there are two faults for this. The first is that the words within the acknowledgment tick all the boxes that apply to a suitable, correct, and under-the-radar statement. The second is that the listeners are not enthused or affected by these words. Even without these faults, acknowledgements “can never be more than a move to innocence if it is not combined with concrete actions embedded in relationships of solidarity.”<sup>21</sup> While Land Acknowledgements can play a role in decolonization, they are meaningless if they fall short of the argument that they serve.

## Fostering Discomfort with Land Acknowledgments in Education

Corrie Whitmore, an Associate Professor of Health Sciences at the University of Alaska Anchorage, explains how these acknowledgements are used as a step that “educators and institutions can take to begin realigning their relationship with Indigenous peoples.”<sup>22</sup> Land Acknowledgements within post-secondary institutions specifically provide a sense of allyship, whether truthful or not. Post-secondary institutions in Canada are widely taught within the Western colonial view. Whitmore explains that there are more than 630 Indigenous communities across Canada, each with their distinct tie to the land.<sup>23</sup> This allows Canadians to be specific within their acknowledgement, and should enforce speakers to engage and research local Indigenous communities from which their Land Acknowledgement derive. Whitmore explains how Land Acknowledgements should provide “an opportunity to reflect on privilege and oppression, learn about the history of a place and its first peoples, and take a small action to ‘combat the continued erasure of Indigenous People from their lands.’”<sup>24</sup> However, this is not the norm when conducting Land Acknowledgements, and settlers may not understand that they are doing more harm than good with their empty, script-like acknowledgements. Whitmore highlights this failure and explains that “speakers who are not prepared to meaningfully

engage in this process should not do a land acknowledgement; without that context it becomes performative rather than a demonstration of real allyship.”<sup>25</sup> False allyship is harmful to Indigenous communities as it does not invoke a legitimate need for change, but rather connects again to the listeners not being engaged or enthused by the words being spoken. Whitmore recounts an Indigenous professor explaining that “land acknowledgments are about making white people feel better.”<sup>26</sup> Like Whitmore, other scholars critique these “checkbox framing acknowledgments” popular among settler institutions. These critiques are valid as they reduce acknowledgements to a mere formality, lacking genuine reflection or commitment to addressing the ongoing impacts of colonialism. They allow individuals or institutions to feel they’ve fulfilled their responsibility without taking meaningful action toward reconciliation or decolonization.

Joe Wark does an excellent job of describing these box-ticking statements and other issues around acknowledgements in *“Land Acknowledgements in the Academy: Refusing the Settler Myth.”* Wark is an Anishinaabe PhD student at the School of Social Work located at Memorial University in Newfoundland. Wark explains that his own expertise is sought when an Indigenous person is needed to deliver a Land Acknowledgement for the institution.<sup>27</sup> It is not Indigenous people’s responsibility to explain reconciliation to settlers. Indigenous Peoples should also not be used as a means to give a “proper” acknowledgment, or as a means for settlers to avoid discomfort. Wark’s perspective is that acknowledgements “do not have anything to do with actual Indigenous peoples.”<sup>28</sup> Instead, Land Acknowledgements play a part in settler innocence; if one states they are on stolen land, they have done their part for reconciling.

Wark further explains how it is now suggested for post-secondary schools to begin “using the scripts of local universities as a template for those who are developing their own acknowledgements.”<sup>29</sup> Acknowledgements should not be used as a script to follow or to be used as inspiration for other acknowledgements. In their true form, “territorial acknowledgements were viewed as a means to educate and build relationships of solidarity with settlers.”<sup>30</sup> What was once used as a powerful political statement of solidarity is now being obscured with empty allyship. Land Acknowledgements are built upon three main ideas— recognizing being on treaty territory, the historic nations on said territory, and then explaining that the acknowledgment is a means of actively engaging in reconciliation. Ashley Cordes of the University of Oregon has assembled an

overly-used script based on acknowledgements from universities throughout the United States and Canada:

"We recognize/acknowledge the Indigenous lands on which \_\_\_\_\_ University is situated. The area now known as \_\_\_\_\_ city has been caretaken/stewarded by \_\_\_\_\_ nations (or tribes) and is now home to many Indigenous peoples."<sup>31</sup>

Universities are "products and machines of settler colonialism" where activism primarily stems from Indigenous scholars, students, and other community members.<sup>32</sup> Because of this influx of Western ways of teaching, Land Acknowledgements normally go unexamined within universities. Every student has heard some variation of this scripted acknowledgement; however, **active** engagement in reconciliation is often lacking. Wark explains that these acknowledgements are often treated as – "just another item to be checked off the agenda before moving on to the real business at hand."<sup>33</sup> This "real business" cannot occur if anything stated in the acknowledgement requires any critical thinking, provokes discomfort, or even worse, causes offence to anyone in the room. Cordes explains how institutional acknowledgements today are "intended to admit and sanitize historical injustices, while hedging continued injustices."<sup>34</sup> This is harmful to Indigenous Peoples because it fails "to truly acknowledge the historical trauma of genocide, how forcible removal was required for that land to come into their possession, and how that feels for Indigenous peoples now."<sup>35</sup> These acknowledgments do not respect Indigenous Peoples or allow for reconciliation, but rather reinforce the settler permeance within Canada.

Although many institutions believe these acknowledgements to be correct and progressive, Cordes views them as "giving into pressure to adhere to a level of political correctness that they believe will result in student satisfaction and enrollment."<sup>36</sup> This need for satisfaction instead of reconciliation is prominent throughout settler institutions within Canada. Decolonization is not a scripted act, yet institutions within Treaty Six, and across Canada, commonly treat it as such.

While many universities within Canada seem to be heading in the right direction in recognizing the importance of Land Acknowledgements, there are still institutions that fail to reflect on the significance within their words. The University of Toronto's Land Acknowledgement is a great example of this. Despite their explanation of why Land Acknowledgements are important, we are greeted with another box ticking acknowledgement, very similar to Cordes' example,

that reads:

"I (we) wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississauga's of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land."<sup>37</sup>

In contrast, the University of Alberta provides a video on their website that explains why land acknowledgements should go beyond the script. In this video, the narrator asks the question "have they [land acknowledgements] become so commonplace that we've forgotten what they stand for?"<sup>38</sup> This video provides context on why we give acknowledgements, and the historical implications of land displacement. Additionally, it explains that settler Canadians should create their own acknowledgement, that rather than using a given script, they should "bring it out of abstraction and make it concrete."<sup>39</sup> The narrator of the video explains that "We are all Treaty people. We all have responsibilities in relationship to the people and the land. What are yours?"<sup>40</sup> Providing this explanation instead of just a script allows settler Canadians to learn and understand the significance of Land Acknowledgements, rather than guessing their meaning.

## Land Acknowledgements and Treaty 6

With all of this in mind, settlers can begin to reflect on Land Acknowledgments within Treaty 6 and Amiskwaciwâskahikan area, which translates to Beaver Hill House, now known as Edmonton. Settlers can begin to understand what constitutes a harmful statement, compared to a statement built for change. In this section, I will analyze several Land Acknowledgements from organizations within Treaty 6, which illustrate the difference between "comfortable" and "uncomfortable" land acknowledgements.

For example, the Edmonton Oilers can be seen as the heart of the Edmonton community; the group's presence in the downtown area is very recognizable. As Wark stated, "you know a phenomenon has really arrived in Canada when it involves hockey."<sup>41</sup> The Edmonton Oilers have had their pre-game Land Acknowledgement in place since 2021. The statement was created with Edmonton Cree consultant Lance Cardinal and is given by Chief Wilton Littlechild, who is a former commissioner for the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission.<sup>42</sup> The statement reads:

“This land has been the traditional region for homelands of the Métis people of Alberta, the Inuit and ancestral territory of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux and Nakota Sioux people since time immemorial, the recognition of our history on this land is an act of reconciliation and we honour those who walk with us.”<sup>43</sup>

While this statement is clear on the historical ties to the land, it has remained the exact same since it was first performed. Despite Treaty 6 and Canada being an everchanging entity, the Oilers acknowledgement is not. Many also believe this acknowledgment to be contradictory as the organization’s actions in the community do not reflect the acknowledgement they provide. For example, Boyle Street Community Services recently relocated due to the Katz Group, who owns the Edmonton Oilers, taking the “largest homeless serving agency to court in order to not pay the \$5 million they had promised.”<sup>44</sup> Despite fundraising efforts reaching 7.8 million dollars, Boyle Street still fell short by 5 million dollars.<sup>45</sup> This was the “end result of the Oilers forcing Boyle Street Community Services out of their home of 25 years.”<sup>46</sup> Boyle Street helps many unhoused Indigenous Peoples, including residential school survivors. While the Oilers Land Acknowledgement itself is celebrated due to its involvement with Indigenous Peoples, the Oilers and the Katz Entertainment Group’s actions do not reflect their engagement within the community.

Another disappointing acknowledgement is provided by The Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA). They have a statement for multiple Treaty territories, all being the same. The only difference is the nations within the territory and where its location is in Alberta. They additionally have a general acknowledgement, one lengthy acknowledgement and another shorter one. The shorter acknowledgement states:

“The Alberta Teachers’ Association respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 territories—the travelling route, gathering place and meeting grounds for Indigenous Peoples, whose histories, languages, cultures, and traditions continue to influence our vibrant community. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. We recognize the land as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on or are visiting.”<sup>47</sup>

This is not an acknowledgement, but rather a script that any teacher in Canada can recite with a few clicks on the website. This example fails to mention Indigenous nations’ names. As Asher had mentioned, naming the nations plays a role in understanding the land as well as the historical relations between Indigenous Peoples and settlers; the intention is “to combat erasure and force settlers to grapple with our positionality.”<sup>48</sup> Also included on the ATA’s website is an explanation on why “Land acknowledgements should be part of a thoughtful, intentional process that moves beyond performative gestures of reconciliation.”<sup>49</sup> While this is true, and the ATA does a good job of explaining why these territorial land acknowledgements are important, this is not seen in the script-like acknowledgements provided on their website. For an institution based upon learning, their statements require little reflection and lack any mention of residential schooling. The Alberta Teacher’s Association has a responsibility, as an organization dedicated to education, to provide a Land Acknowledgement that educates both teachers and students about the importance of recognizing and respecting Indigenous histories and cultures.

The acknowledgements above are all examples of “comfortable” Land Acknowledgements. They are based on what may be considered politically correct and unproblematic. At first glance, the reader may not understand that these are examples of poor acknowledgements. If used in front of an audience, they offer enough for the listeners to vaguely understand Treaty land, but little is achieved besides that. The listeners may also take no offense from the acknowledgements, as they do not call out colonial behaviour or explain what reconciliation is. This allows the readers and listeners to feel good about their actions around the acknowledgement, but often do not call for further attention after they are given.

Leaning towards a more thoughtful Land Acknowledgement, the City of Edmonton provides an acknowledgement where they thank Indigenous communities within Treaty 6 for allowing settlers to call Edmonton home. This statement is rooted in a future with Indigenous communities which at least looks forward to Indigenous and settler relations within Treaty 6. An excerpt from their statement reads,

“The city of Edmonton owes its strength and vibrancy to these lands and the diverse Indigenous peoples who ancestors’ footsteps have marked this territory as well as settlers from around the world who continue to be welcomed here and call Edmonton home.”<sup>50</sup>

This acknowledgment from the City of Edmonton is essential for fostering and maintaining relationships with Indigenous communities. The Land Acknowledgement plays a broader role to promote inclusion within the city. The acknowledgement offers a thoughtful explanation of the significance of Indigenous relationships, highlighting the importance of recognizing the deep historical and cultural connections that Indigenous communities have with the land. This approach fosters a more genuine understanding of the role these relationships play in shaping the city's identity and emphasizes the responsibility to honor and support Indigenous peoples in a meaningful and ongoing way.

A more impressive Land Acknowledgement is provided by REACH Edmonton, a community-based, non-profit organization which strives to "make Edmonton a safer community in one generation by focusing on crime prevention programs and initiatives."<sup>51</sup> The REACH Edmonton Land Acknowledgement gives a brief history of Treaty 6 and explains the reasoning for Land Acknowledgements. An excerpt from this acknowledgement states that:

"The reason we do Land Acknowledgements is to honour those who have come before us and who have safeguarded this sacred land that we share and call home. In this small act of Reconciliation, we also acknowledge and celebrate the amazing connection Indigenous people have to the land."<sup>52</sup>

This invites its readers to reflect on why we love the land we live on, which allows for productive thinking, something the other statements were lacking. REACH also mentions the meaning of Wahkohtowin, and how it is rooted within their own work in Edmonton.

Fort Edmonton Park, a cultural tourist attraction owned by the City of Edmonton and the largest living history museum in Canada, provides text that explains the importance of Land Acknowledgements. They recognize the growing popularity of Land Acknowledgements and that it should be upon the listeners to learn something from them, including things that settlers can do to honor these acknowledgements. The framework provided for honoring Land Acknowledgements for settlers follows:

- "seeking knowledge about the traditional territory you are on.
- approaching Indigenous communities to learn more about them and create meaningful relationships.

- learning and using knowledge respectfully.
- learning and using the proper words and pronunciation of the Indigenous languages.
- understanding the relation between the initial occupants of the land and settlers."<sup>53</sup>

Fort Edmonton Park allows settlers within the city to reflect on their actions and provides a framework for how to be active allies within their community. Additionally, their acknowledgement mentions how "creating concrete actions in collaboration and partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit is crucial for your words to hold meaning beyond your event, meeting or conference."<sup>54</sup> This idea reiterates the need for Land Acknowledgements to be based in settler discomfort. If settlers are to give Land Acknowledgements, they must step out of the comfort of box-ticking acknowledgements and allow for their words to hold enduring meaning. These latter acknowledgements have key differences in comparison to the first set of "comfortable" acknowledgements. These texts were more willing to explain colonialization, and how Land Acknowledgements are given as an act of decolonization. They also describe the nations' names within the acknowledgements, which is an act of respect and reclamation. Explaining the reasoning for Land Acknowledgements, they allow more involvement from the listeners to experience methods of self-reflection. While these acknowledgements create a space of discomfort, they also grant room for change.

## Conclusion

The importance of Land Acknowledgements shows settlers how words must go beyond the space they are being spoken into. Suzanne Keptwo, an Indigenous artist and educator, discusses this need to participate in Land Acknowledgements in *"We All Go Back to the Land: The Who, Why, and How of Land Acknowledgements."* Keptwo is optimistic in that she believes there is an opportunity for Indigenous Peoples to communicate their worldview and values to settlers in Canada. Settlers can also begin to see how improper Indigenous education affects Indigenous communities as it proclaims the erasure of Indigenous peoples' "historic truths that impact current realities, and it does nothing to help eradicate systemic and overt racism across the nation-state of Canada."<sup>55</sup> This argument connects to the broader idea of Western education, and how these institutions do not promote a deeper understanding of Indigenous history. This idea, however, is not to place blame, rather, Keptwo explains how "we are all born with strengths and weaknesses, and it is up to each

individual to explore and discover their strengths and weaknesses.”<sup>56</sup> Despite the flaws that are present within Land Acknowledgements, there is always a possibility for change. For change to happen, settlers must realize that they are wrong in their actions. Keptwo explains that settlers need to do more for Indigenous communities. Actions must reach far past words read off a sheet of paper— the Land Acknowledgement is an “opportunity to educate the masses—even in bits and pieces” on Indigenous peoples’ terms.<sup>57</sup> Keptwo invites all Canadians to become protectors of the land, and promotes engagement in the time and effort that it will take to embrace the “Original Agreement as the ultimate act of Reconciliation.”<sup>58</sup> This original agreement is built on mutual respect, respect for Indigenous sovereignty, nationhood, and decolonization. This agreement is not laid out in many settler Land Acknowledgements, and the erasure of Indigenous rights cannot persist as a result of settler misunderstandings.

Looking back at Asher’s text, she highlights that “performing a territorial acknowledgment is just one small element in this larger process of living decolonial solidarity.”<sup>59</sup> This small element plays a larger role in being an active participant in reconciliation. Land Acknowledgements within settler institutions must be improved within Edmonton and elsewhere for reconciliation to take place, and respectful statements will support and preserve Indigenous livelihood.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>In "Rethinking Treaty Six," Neal McLeod explains how the Nehiyawak, or the Cree peoples understood Treaty is in reference to the sun, the grass, and the river. "The Nehiyawak memory states that the treaties were to be good "as long as the grass grows, and as long as the sun walks." McLeod, Neal, "Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear)." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 19, no. 1 (January 1, 1999), 72.

<sup>2</sup>This article uses the capitalization of "Land Acknowledgement" to emphasize its significance and to show respect for the practice. Capitalization can show that Land Acknowledgements are not a generic or casual statement but a formal, intentional recognition of Indigenous lands and histories. It also highlights the importance of this act in addressing colonial histories and promoting reconciliation. By capitalizing "Land Acknowledgement," we give weight to its purpose and acknowledge its cultural and historical significance.

<sup>3</sup>"Indigenous Peoples" is plural to reflect the diversity among the various Indigenous groups around the world. The term "Peoples" acknowledges that there are many distinct nations, cultures, languages, and traditions within the broader category of Indigenous communities. Each group has its own unique identity, history, and rights.

<sup>4</sup>"Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," accessed May 22, 2024, <https://nctr.ca/about/history-of-the-trc/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-of-canada/>

<sup>5</sup>Wrightson, Kelsey Radcliffe, "We Are Treaty Peoples: The Common Understanding of Treaty 6 and Contemporary Treaty in British Columbia" (PhD diss., University of Victoria, 2007), 65

<sup>6</sup>McLeod, "Rethinking Treaty Six," 70.

<sup>7</sup>McLeod, "Rethinking Treaty Six," 70.

<sup>8</sup>McLeod, "Rethinking Treaty Six," 72.

<sup>9</sup>McLeod, "Rethinking Treaty Six," 72.

<sup>10</sup>Wrightson, "We are Treaty Peoples," 65.

<sup>11</sup>Wrightson, "We are Treaty Peoples," 66.

<sup>12</sup>Wrightson, "We are Treaty Peoples," 66.

<sup>13</sup>Wrightson, "We are Treaty Peoples," 66.

<sup>14</sup>Wrightson, "We are Treaty Peoples," 68.

<sup>15</sup>Wrightson, "We are Treaty Peoples," 69.

<sup>16</sup>Wrightson, "We are Treaty Peoples," 70

<sup>17</sup>Asher, L., J. Curnow, and A. Davis. "The Limits of Settlers' Territorial Acknowledgments." *Curriculum Inquiry* 48, no. 3 (May 27, 2018) 318.

<sup>18</sup>Asher, "The Limits of Settlers' Territorial Acknowledgments." 318.

<sup>19</sup>Asher, "The Limits of Settlers' Territorial Acknowledgments." 318.

<sup>20</sup>Asher, "The Limits of Settlers' Territorial Acknowledgments." 326.

<sup>21</sup>Asher, "The Limits of Settlers' Territorial Acknowledgments." 330.

<sup>22</sup>Whitmore, C, and Carlson, E. "Making Land Acknowledgements in the University Setting Meaningful and Appropriate." *College Teaching* 72, no. 1 (January 1, 2024,) 9.

<sup>23</sup>Whitmore and Carlson, "Making Land Acknowledgements in the University Setting Meaningful and Appropriate," 9.

<sup>24</sup>Whitmore and Carlson, "Making Land Acknowledgements in the University Setting Meaningful and Appropriate," 10.

<sup>25</sup>Whitmore and Carlson, "Making Land Acknowledgements in the University Setting Meaningful and Appropriate," 10.

<sup>26</sup>Whitmore and Carlson, "Making Land Acknowledgements in the University Setting Meaningful and Appropriate," 10.

<sup>27</sup>Wark, J. "Land Acknowledgements in the Academy: Refusing the Settler Myth." *Curriculum Inquiry* 51, no. 2 (January 1, 2021) 192.

<sup>28</sup>Wark, "Land Acknowledgements in the Academy," 192.



- <sup>29</sup>Wark, "Land Acknowledgements in the Academy," 194.
- <sup>30</sup>Wark, "Land Acknowledgements in the Academy," 194.
- <sup>31</sup>Cordes, A. "Place Is Everything: Remembering Responsibilities between and beyond Land Acknowledgments." *COMMUNICATION AND CRITICAL-CULTURAL STUDIES* 20, no. 2 (April 3, 2023) 194.
- <sup>32</sup>Cordes, A. "Place Is Everything," 192.
- <sup>33</sup>Wark, "Land Acknowledgements in the Academy," 195.
- <sup>34</sup>Cordes, A. "Place Is Everything," 191.
- <sup>35</sup>Cordes, A. "Place Is Everything," 194.
- <sup>36</sup>Cordes, A. "Place Is Everything," 194.
- <sup>37</sup>"Land Acknowledgement," accessed July 27, 2024. <https://indigenous.utoronto.ca/about/land-acknowledgement/>
- <sup>38</sup>"Land Acknowledgements, Territorial Acknowledgements: Going Beyond the Script," accessed July 27, 2024. <https://www.ualberta.ca/centre-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-support/indigenization/land-acknowledgements.html>
- <sup>39</sup>"Land Acknowledgements, Territorial Acknowledgements: Going Beyond the Script."
- <sup>40</sup>"Land Acknowledgements, Territorial Acknowledgements: Going Beyond the Script."
- <sup>41</sup>Wark, "Land Acknowledgements in the Academy," 194.
- <sup>42</sup>Hobson, B. "Cree artist helps Edmonton Oilers craft Indigenous land acknowledgment." Accessed May 18, 2024, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/lance-cardinal-land-acknowledgements-edmonton-oilers-1.6226806>
- <sup>43</sup>"Cree artist helps Edmonton Oilers craft Indigenous land acknowledgment."
- <sup>44</sup>Kinney, D. "Break the Boyle Street curse. It's time the Oilers paid Boyle Street the \$5 million they promised." Accessed September 21, 2024. [https://www.theprogressreport.ca/oilers\\_boyle\\_street](https://www.theprogressreport.ca/oilers_boyle_street)
- <sup>45</sup>Parsons, P. "Katz Group launches court battle with Edmonton homeless organization over \$5M donation." Accessed September 21, 2024. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/katz-group-launches-court-battle-with-edmonton-homeless-organization-over-5-million-donation-1.7109439>
- <sup>46</sup>"Break the Boyle Street curse. It's time the Oilers paid Boyle Street the \$5 million they promised."
- <sup>47</sup>"Land Acknowledgements," *The Alberta Teacher's Association*, accessed November 29, 2023, <https://teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/indigenous-education-and-walking-together/land-acknowledgements>
- <sup>48</sup>Asher, "The Limits of Settlers' Territorial Acknowledgments." 318.
- <sup>49</sup>"Land Acknowledgements."
- <sup>50</sup>"Land Acknowledgement." *The City of Edmonton*, accessed July 27, 2024, <https://cityplan.edmonton.ca/indigenous-acknowledgement>
- <sup>51</sup>"REACH Edmonton." Accessed May 19, 2024, [https://www.edmonton.ca/public-files/assets/document?path=PDF/REACH\\_Council\\_for\\_Safe\\_Communities.pdf](https://www.edmonton.ca/public-files/assets/document?path=PDF/REACH_Council_for_Safe_Communities.pdf)
- <sup>52</sup>"Reach's Land Acknowledgement," *REACH Edmonton*. Accessed November 29, 2023. <https://reachedmonton.ca/land-acknowledgement/>
- <sup>53</sup>"The Importance of Acknowledging Land and Treaty." *Fort Edmonton Park*, accessed May 19, 2024, <https://www.fortedmontonpark.ca/learn/blog/post/the-importance-of-acknowledging-land-and-treaty>
- <sup>54</sup>"The Importance of Acknowledging Land and Treaty."
- <sup>55</sup>Suzanne Keptwo, *We All Go Back to the Land: The Who, Why, and How of Land Acknowledgements* (Brush Education, 2021) 68.
- <sup>56</sup>Keptwo, "We All Go Back to the Land," 375.
- <sup>57</sup>Keptwo, "We All Go Back to the Land," 74.
- <sup>58</sup>Keptwo, "We All Go Back to the Land," 391.
- <sup>59</sup>Asher, "The Limits of Settlers' Territorial Acknowledgments," 330.

## References

- Asher, L., J. Curnow, and A. Davis. "The Limits of Settlers' Territorial Acknowledgments." *Curriculum Inquiry* 48, no. 3 (May 27, 2018): 316-334-334. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2018.1468211>
- Cordes, Ashley. "Place Is Everything: Remembering Responsibilities between and beyond Land Acknowledgments." *COMMUNICATION AND CRITICAL-CULTURAL STUDIES* 20, no. 2 (April 3, 2023): 191-99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2023.2202724>
- Hobson, Brittany. "Cree artist helps Edmonton Oilers craft Indigenous land acknowledgment." *CBC News*, October 29, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/lance-cardinal-land-acknowledgements-edmonton-oilers-1.6226806>
- Keptwo, Suzanne. *We All Go Back to the Land: The Who, Why, and How of Land Acknowledgements*. Brush Education, 2021. <https://search-ebscohost.com/login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2746315&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Kinney, Duncan. "Break the Boyle Street curse. It's time the Oilers paid Boyle Street the \$5 million they promised." *The Progress Report*, May 17, 2023. <https://www.theprogressreport.ca/oilers-boyle-street>.
- "Land Acknowledgements." *The Alberta Teacher's Association*. Accessed November 29, 2023. <https://teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/indigenous-education-and-walking-together/land-acknowledgements>
- "Land Acknowledgement." *The City of Edmonton*, accessed July 27, 2024, <https://cityplan.edmonton.ca/indigenous-acknowledgement>
- "Land Acknowledgement." accessed July 27, 2024. <https://indigenous.utoronto.ca/about/land-acknowledgement/>
- "Land Acknowledgements, Territorial Acknowledgements: Going Beyond the Script." *Centre for Teaching and Learning, University of Alberta*. Accessed October 10, 2024. <https://www.ualberta.ca/centre-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-support/indigenization/land-acknowledgements.html>.
- McLeod, Neal. "Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear)." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 19, no. 1 (January 1, 1999): 69-89. <https://search-ebscohost-com.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edscpi&AN=edscpi.A30085114&site=eds-live&scope=site>.
- Parsons, Paige. "Katz Group launches court battle with Edmonton homeless organization over \$5M donation." *CBC News*, June 20, 2023. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/katz-group-launches-court-battle-with-edmonton-homeless-organization-over-5-million-donation-1.7109439>.
- "REACH Edmonton." Accessed May 19, 2024, [https://www.edmonton.ca/public-files/assets/document?path=PDF/REACH\\_Council\\_for\\_Safe\\_Communities.pdf](https://www.edmonton.ca/public-files/assets/document?path=PDF/REACH_Council_for_Safe_Communities.pdf)
- "Reach's Land Acknowledgement." *REACH Edmonton*. Accessed November 29, 2023. <https://reachedmonton.ca/land-acknowledgement/>
- "The Importance of Acknowledging Land and Treaty." *Fort Edmonton Park*, 2024, <https://www.fortedmontonpark.ca/learn/blog/post/the-importance-of-acknowledging-land-and-treaty>
- "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," accessed May 22, 2024, <https://nctr.ca/about/history-of-the-trc/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-of-canada/>
- Wark, Joe. "Land Acknowledgements in the Academy: Refusing the Settler Myth." *Curriculum Inquiry* 51, no. 2 (January 1, 2021): 191-209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2021.1889924>
- Whitmore, Corrie and Carlson, Erik. "Making Land Acknowledgements in the University Setting Meaningful and Appropriate." *College Teaching* 72, no. 1 (January 1, 2024): 9-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2022.2070720>
- Wrightson, Kelsey Radcliffe, "We Are Treaty Peoples: The Common Understanding of Treaty 6 and Contemporary Treaty in British Columbia." *Networked Digital Library of Theses & Dissertations* (1828.2968).