



Prepared by
Muckpaloo Ipeelie - Urban Inuit Identity Project Inc.
Vanessa Kennedy - Red Quills

Why Acknowledge Land?

Land acknowledgements are a way to bring awareness to the local Indigenous community who live and value the local Land, past Indigenous Land uses and current Indigenous Land rights. It is also a subtle way to bring historical accounts of colonialism forward in an effort to work towards truth, action and towards relationship improvements between settlers and the local Indigenous community.

However, these acknowledgements can become token gestures rather than meaningful practice. Each organization who chooses to say a Land Acknowledgement is responsible to consider what it means for them and why they are putting one in place. Meaningful thought includes: what privileges does the settler community continuously receives because of the Land usage; how the community received the Land privilege; the resulting relationship between the settlers and Indigenous community; consideration of trauma and intergenerational trauma of Indigenous peoples; and finally implementing a pathway forward to strengthen the relationships between the organization as a whole, their workers and the local Indigenous community.

Where Did This Research Come From?

The following historical Land usage was researched by Muckpaloo Ipeelie an Inuk who is a local Blue Mountain resident. It focuses on specifically the Tionontati group who called this area home. Cites were taken from authors who have historical

roots in the Wasaga area. Local First Nations Knowledge keepers were also cited.

Oral history from Vanessa Kennedy was used.

Who Wrote the Land Acknowledgement?

The Land Acknowledgement was written by Vanessa Kennedy a local Anishinaabe woman from Hillsdale Ontario. It includes oral history, written history, it brings in Indigenous Spirituality, and it holds meaningfulness. It was edited by Muckpaloo Ipeelie.

Next Steps

The proposed Land Acknowledgement can be adjusted, shortened, lengthened by yourself as an organization or you can choose on the next meeting to ask questions about changing it. During the editing phase, use the research provided and use the references to help you along the way. You may also choose to keep a long version for inter-organizational meetings and a shorter version for inter-departmental meetings.

Next, contact Muckpaloo Ipeelie to book your virtual learning session about the Land Acknowledgement. A 20–30-minute learning session will be provided along with time for a Q&A.

The Town of Wasaga Beach's Indigenous History

The Town of Wasaga Beach is built on historical Lands once occupied by Tionontati people. They were part of the larger Wyandot group₁. The Wyandot called these Lands Wendake which spanned from Midland, Barrie, Creemore to Craigleith. The Tionontati lived around and on the mountains from Creemore to Craigleith₂. They spoke a Northern Haudenosaunee dialect. They were known to be excellent beaver hunters. During the years around 1650, the Wyandot as a whole suffered from disease brought on by contact from Jesuit missionaries₁. Also, the clashing between Christian evangelists and Tionontati caused political stress on the Nation. Stresses included differences in patriarchal views from the Jesuits since Tionontati society was matriarchal₁. Fighting disease, changing of Spiritual beliefs and societal structure weakened the Wyandot Nation against attacks from the Haudenosaunee. The Haudenosaunee from the New York area (Five Nations) attacked the Wyandot group for the rich fur trapping Lands of Wendake amongst other reasons₁. Fur, especially beaver pelts were in high demand from Europeans. This war is also known as the beaver wars₇.

Around this time, the Anishinaabe have continuously lived and moved throughout lower, and upper Canada as well as through the United States. The Haudenosaunee made alliances near the Canadian border with Wyandot.

Weakened, the Wyandot Nations fled the area and moved into the United States around 1650. Later, the local Anishinaabe chiefs in 1818 signed Treaty 18 (Lake Simcoe-Nottawasaga Treaty) and signed over the Land right to Her Majesty the Queen for yearly payments of \$1200 pounds to the Chippewas Nation³. Yearly payments of \$1200 have not increased with inflation⁷.

Seeking refuge, a smaller amount of the Wyandot became absorbed into the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee groups. Others moved to the Quebec area, or followed the larger Wyandot group into the United States¹. The Wyandot in Oklahoma, United States now name themselves as the Wyandotte Nation⁶. These groups have occupied or traveled through this Land since time immemorial⁷.

Turtle Island is a collective term used by many First Nations people. It is used to describe the North American continent which is shaped like a turtle. Before the creation of Canada and the United States, First Nations groups freely traveled on Turtle Island without the concept of country borders. Turtle Island is also a term used to describe the Land that all the Indigenous people live on, which unites First Nations, Inuit and Metis. Not all groups used the term Turtle Island, or consider the turtle part of their creation story^{7, 8}. However, Anishinaabe⁴, Haudenosaunee⁵, and Wyandotte⁶ people do. For this reason, turtle island is not mentioned in the Land Acknowledgement to be more inclusive of all Indigenous groups of Canada.

Short Form Historical Account

Wasaga Beach is on the historical Lands occupied by Tionontati people, (People of the Hills) who were part of a larger Wyandot group up until 1650. Their Lands spanned from Midland, Barrie to Craigeleith and were collectively known as Wendake. The Beaver wars, and European interaction weakened the Wyandot group and they left or became absorbed into local First Nations groups. Since time immemorial, Anishinaabe and Three Fires Confederacy, and Haudenosaunee groups have and continue to care and use this Land.

References

1. Dispersed But Not Destroyed: *A History of the Seventeenth-Century Wendat People* by Kathryn Magee Labelle
2. *The Petun: People of the Hills* by Pat Raible
3. *Map of Ontario treaties and reserves* retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/map-ontario-treaties-and-reserves>
4. Jeff Monague for City of Innisfil: *Land Acknowledgement* retrieved from <https://innisfil.ca/en/my-government/land-acknowledgment>
5. Jillian Morris for Collingwood Today: *COLUMN: Sky Woman creation story can connect us to Earth and each other* retrieved from <https://www.collingwoodtoday.ca/columns/kanikonhriio/column-sky-woman-creation-story-can-connect-us-to-earth-and-each-other-4241290>
6. Wyandotte Nation: *Our Culture* retrieved from <https://wyandotte-nation.org/culture/>
7. Vanessa Kennedy from Red Quill's retrieved from oral history
8. Muckpaloo Ipeelie from Urban Inuit Identity Project retrieved from oral history

**The Proposed Land Acknowledgement from Urban Inuit Identity Project and Red
Quills from April 28th 2024**

“The Town of Wasaga Beach acknowledges it is located upon the traditional territory of the Anishnaabe people of the Three Fires Confederacy. We also acknowledge that the people of the Wyandot Nation also inhabited these lands.

We acknowledge that these nations were sovereign nations existing before the arrival of settlers. We respect the spiritual interconnection among these nations to the land and to the water.

We also acknowledge that waterways near us have a long history predating European arrival. Since time immemorial, waterways were the lifeblood of the Indigenous people by trade and hunting routes.

We are dedicated to inclusivity of First Nations, Inuit and Metis people in our future stewardship of the land. In the spirit of reconciliation, we welcome the opportunity of learning to be sustainable caretakers of the land and waterways for all future generations.”