

Grande Prairie Aboriginal Circle of Services (GPACOS)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT RESOURCE

OVERVIEW

In response to questions regarding land acknowledgements from local organizations, GPACOS has prepared a resource with two suggested land acknowledgements to encompass the region in which we live and work.

GPACOS recognizes that this area is full of wonderfully diverse and unique Indigenous peoples and histories, and respects that this resource may not suit everyone. We encourage those utilizing this resource to reflect on the wording and engage in dialogue with other Indigenous folks. Our intention is to support our community in learning more about acknowledging the land.

The following land acknowledgements were gathered together by a sub-committee of GPACOS consisting of Shannon Dunfield, Kelly Benning, Wendy Goulet, Victoria Wanihadie, Rene Dubee, Samantha Mercer and Brigitte Benning. They were then unanimously approved by GPACOS on November 27th, 2018.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Formal Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge the homeland of the many diverse First Nations and Métis people whose ancestors have walked this land since time immemorial. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Treaty 8.

Short Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge the Indigenous people and ancestors whose land we are on.

The first is intended for more formal settings, bigger groups, or longer meetings. For example, the formal acknowledgement may be suitable for opening a conference, event or assembly.

The second one is intended for more casual occasions or after someone has already made the formal acknowledgement. For example, when one is the third speaker at an event, at the beginning of an informal meeting, or during morning announcements.

NOTES ON LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PHRASING

Homeland for First Nations & Métis: Often, homeland is used only for Métis peoples within the area. However, the term homeland also encompasses the various First Nations people of the area. As such, it has been used for both First Nations and Métis acknowledgement.

Homeland before Treaty: Often, acknowledgement of the Treaty is first within a Land Acknowledgement. However, the Treaty is an agreement that was made with settlers later in history - the Indigenous peoples had been on this land since time immemorial. As such, we feel it is important to recognize the homeland before the Treaty.

Acknowledging our Ancestors: While certain groups of people continue to live on this land, there are many no longer present today that have a strong history and tie to the land. Thus, we acknowledge the people and the Ancestors.

First Nations: Sometimes specific First Nations are acknowledged within the area. Such as Cree and Beaver. However, this potentially leaves out important groups. Instead, we have chosen the term First Nations to encompass the various peoples of this area.

Métis Region: Sometimes the Métis Region is acknowledged for Métis peoples. However, some Métis peoples are tied to their settlements not the region. Instead, we have chosen the term homeland to encompass the lands in which the Métis peoples whose land we are on.

Acknowledging Treaty: In some cases, Indigenous people reject the term Treaty due to the oppressive and colonial history of treaties. While this is an educational piece to share, Treaty 8 still exists and continues to affect the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people today. Thus, we feel it is important to acknowledge and recognize that we are in traditional territory of Treaty 8.

Gratitude: We have added that “we are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Treaty 8” . This ties the past to the present and recognizes where we stand today. It also expresses necessary gratitude and brings a good feeling to the acknowledgement.

