

# Land Acknowledgement Working Group Final Report

July 2022

## Overview



The Land Acknowledgement Working Group, active from March to July 2022, explored the scholarship around the idea of land acknowledgements and investigated strategies for incorporating resources and information into the BTAA-GIN websites.

## Deliverable

[BTAA-GIN Land Acknowledgement Action Plan](#)

## Summary of the work:

The working group read a substantial number of articles and reports about the benefits and limitations of land acknowledgements, as well as broader issues of data sovereignty and representation. Lists of these resources and our notes are available within our working group folder:

-  Land Acknowledgements Readings and Resource List
-  Digital Mapping and Indigenous America

Based on our discussions and readings, we concluded that writing a conventional statement (i.e., something read before presentations about the Geoportal) was not the best approach. Such statements acknowledge injustice but generally do not result in any specific actions addressing that injustice. Additionally, land acknowledgement statements typically recognize only the land around the speaker's location, which only tells part of the story. However, most of our Network's universities were established and endowed through the practice of selling indigenous occupied land in other parts of the country.

We recommend that if team members choose to give a land acknowledgement, it should:

- Be the product of individual reflection rather than a pre-constructed script
- Encourage support for the contemporary, ongoing efforts and priorities of affected tribes

## Next Steps

The Action Plan is a public-facing document that will be reviewed and sustained by the Steering Committee. It outlines broad commitments and proposes tangible actions the Geoportal Project Team might take to move forward on these objectives. However, it does not specify which

Committees should be responsible for the work. To encourage continued action around resources impacting Indigenous communities, we propose the following steps:

- Steering Committee: Reach out to community members, such as staff at the [Native Land Information System](#), to get feedback on the Action Plan and approach.
- CDEO(Collection Development): Review resources about tribal lands or resources created by tribally-affiliated groups in the BTAA Geoportal ([spreadsheet with example resources](#)). Create criteria for the inclusion of new resources impacting Indigenous communities.
- Metadata Committee: Review item records for resources to ensure that they have appropriate rights/license statements, as indicated by the data providers.
- Interface, Metadata, and CDEO (Education Outreach) Committees: Explore possible methods for providing contextual information about BTAA Geoportal collections.
- BTAA GIS Conference planners: Invite Indigenous researchers, cartographers, and geospatial professionals to speak about their work at the BTAA GIS Conference (and compensate them for their work).

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