

Native American Indigenous Awareness Month

November

Honoring our Land/Land Acknowledgement

What is it?

Land acknowledgment is a traditional custom that dates back centuries in many Native nations and communities. Today, land acknowledgments are used by Native Peoples and non-Natives to recognize Indigenous Peoples who are the original stewards of the lands on which we now live.

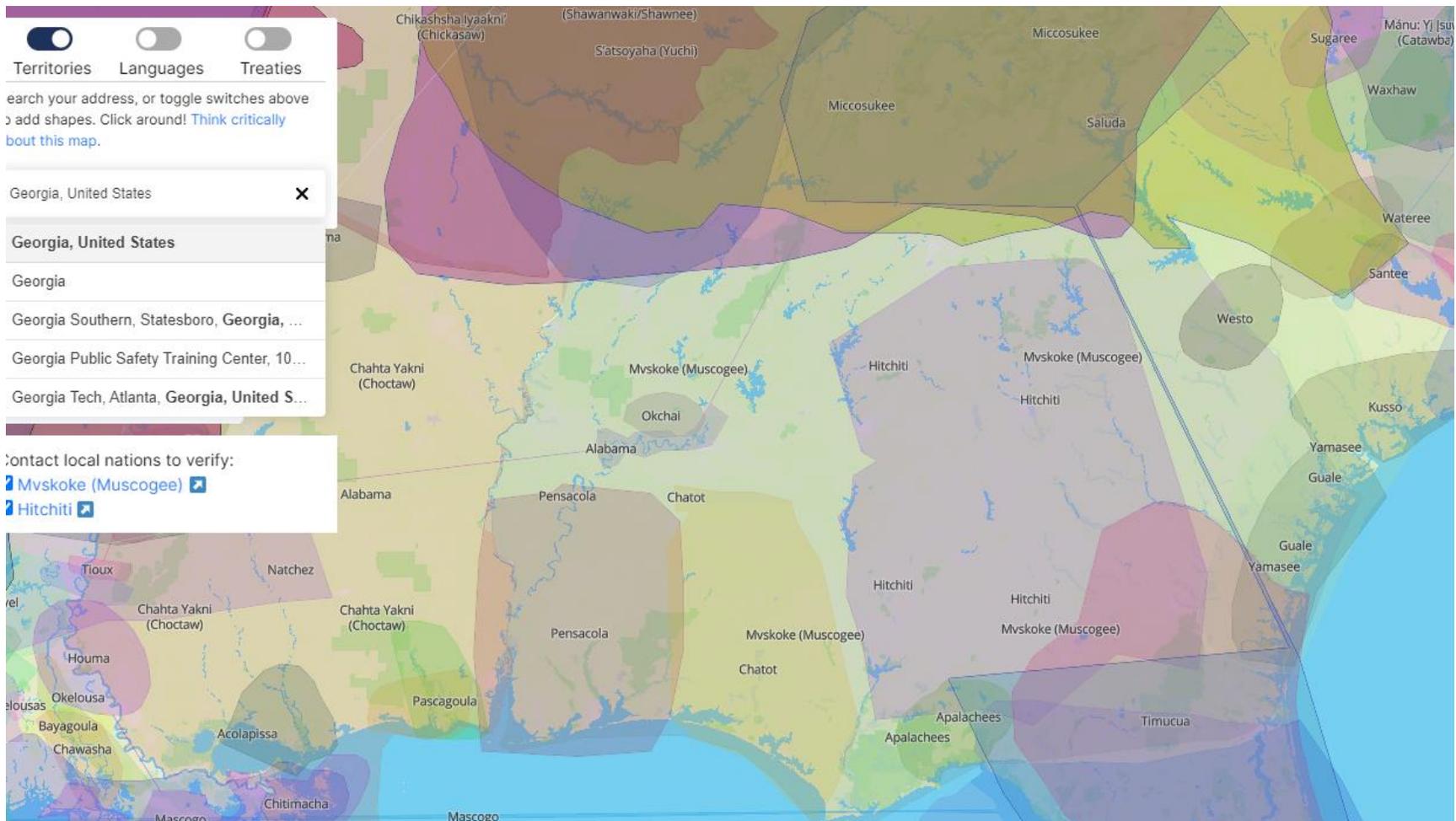
Why do we do it?

“[the] acknowledgment is intended to recognize the Indigenous peoples who have lived where we now work over the long span of human history and the large contemporary Native population that lives in the [area] today.”

How do we know who was on our land?

There are many resources online to see in which tribes land you reside.

One of the most common websites is: [native-land.ca](https://www.native-land.ca)



Here are the tribes that resided in what is now GA.

Sourced from: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/land-acknowledgment>, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/cultural-appropriation>, <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/10-ways-to-be-ally-indigenous-peoples/>

Cultural Appropriation

What is it?

Cultural appropriation, adoption of certain language, behavior, clothing, or tradition belonging to a minority culture or social group by a dominant culture or group in a way that is exploitative, disrespectful, or stereotypical. An imbalance of power between the appropriator and the appropriated is a critical condition of the concept.

Is it an issue?

Cultural appropriation often is viewed as a problem of the postcolonial world; in this way, the term commonly is used in reference to Western or white populations' adoption of aspects of non-Western or non-white cultures.

For communities that have faced systemic oppression, witnessing the commodification of their culture can be offensive and hurtful. One classic manifestation of cultural appropriation occurs when a member of a majority group profits financially or socially from the culture of a minority group. For example, retailers that mass-produce and sell Native American-inspired products, such as tepees for children or decorative dream-catchers, profit from the designs and traditions of Indigenous peoples but may offer no credit or compensation to those whose cultural artifacts were appropriated.

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What is cultural appreciation?

The term *cultural appreciation* has appeared as a counter to the original concept, provoking debates about whether a specific instance of adoption is appropriation or appreciation. While cultural appropriation indicates a harmful or thoughtless action, cultural appreciation indicates that care has been taken to respect the culture at hand. For example, it may be considered cultural appreciation for a white woman to wear a traditional *lehenga* to an Indian wedding, while wearing it as a Halloween costume may be considered appropriative.

10 ways to be an ally to indigenous people:

1. Learn about the people native to where you live and visit.

Beyond learning their names, seek out their histories and who they are today. How did they live in harmony with the land? Which promises did the US government make—and then break? Land acknowledgments in your meetings or introductions is merely a starting point. Make a plan to support Indigenous communities in your area by donating money to local Indigenous organizations, supporting their movements and campaigns, or committing to returning land. Being an ally to Indigenous Peoples means grappling with the fact that you live on stolen land.

2. Remove harmful stereotypes and Indigenous erasure language from your lexicon.

Pow-wow is not a word to substitute for meetings. *Spirit animal* is not your term to use. If you are not Indigenous, you are not a *native Chicagoan*; you are a *Chicago local* or *born and raised Chicagoan*. He isn't *the low man on the totem pole*; he's the *new hire*. These terms may seem harmless, but they are not. Language has power. Being an ally to Indigenous Peoples means showing Native people respect by changing your language.

3. Educate yourself about the structural discrimination towards and intentional elimination of Native tribes.

The violent acts of genocide towards Indigenous Peoples directly led to systemic health and wealth disparities that exist today. Though you didn't learn about it in school, North American colonial history includes the horrors of forced residential schooling and assimilation of Indigenous children—and the widespread abuse and murder of Indigenous Peoples.

4. Support Indigenous Peoples as they protect their land from destructive, extractive practices.

Indigenous resistance is a key component in the environmental movement here. Indigenous Peoples are on the frontlines of the climate crisis, protecting some of the most endangered lands, as well as the water, animals, and people to which they provide a home.

Industries like mining, logging, and fossil fuels are some of the largest perpetuating factors of violence, trafficking, and murder against Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people. In the Americas, Indigenous Peoples are on the frontlines of the fight against fossil fuels; both their people and lands bear the brunt of the pollution. Those of us with representation must demand that Congress stop subsidizing the industry that destroys both Indigenous lands and lives.

“The abuse of women is well known in history, and tells you a lot about what is happening on our earth.” – LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, Standing Rock Sioux

Being an ally to Indigenous Peoples means we recognize their centuries of resistance and stand alongside them as they fight to protect their lives and the planet.

5. Think twice before claiming Native ancestry.

If you are a white American who claims Native ancestry, you must understand that being Indigenous is not about DNA percentages or a family story about a Cherokee princess in your lineage. It's about who claims you, your lived experience as a part of an Indigenous community, and how you show up for the community you claim to be a part of.

Rebecca Nagle is a Cherokee writer and advocate, living in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. She states, "*Pretendians* perpetuate the myth that Native identity is determined by the individual, not the tribe or community, directly undermining tribal sovereignty and Native self-determination. To protect the rights of Indigenous people, pretendians...must be challenged and the retelling of their false narratives must be stopped."

6. Diversify your sources of education and entertainment.

Representation matters. We know that. Unfortunately, it's up to us to show that we want and need to see different faces and hear different voices.

To be an ally to Indigenous Peoples, we must: Seek out Native media. Read books by Indigenous authors. Watch shows and movies written by and starring Native actors. Share those that you enjoy—and especially those that challenge and make you uncomfortable—with friends and family.

7. Respect the hard-earned knowledge and wisdom of Indigenous tribes.

They have a long history of a symbiotic, respectful relationship with the land. To truly heal our planet, we must not only put a stop to extractive capitalist practices, but shift our mindset to living with the earth and all of its species in harmony. Being an ally to Indigenous Peoples means actively learning from them.

8. Follow and share content from Indigenous leaders.

If you use social media, you can hear directly from Indigenous leaders. This thread is just a start of people we've been learning from. As you are able, compensate them for their work and emotional labor.

9. Demand an end to the use of Native mascots.

Native culture is not a costume. Racist stereotypes and mascots are dehumanizing and harmful to the mental health of Indigenous Peoples. If your local school or alma mater has a mascot using a term related to Indigenous Peoples, it is both hostile and actively damaging. Claims from team owners or fans that it is a sign of respect are bogus. We must demand change.

Being an ally to Indigenous Peoples requires speaking up. Write to a local principal or the school board. Boycott the NFL or NCAA. Refuse to support these teams and schools for being racist, derogatory, and offensive. Same for road names, school names, buildings named after white men who implemented anti-Indigenous policies or led wars against Indigenous Peoples.

10. Support the call for Indigenous sovereignty and Land Back.

Restoring stolen lands to Indigenous Peoples will truly upend the power of greedy polluters and ensure climate justice for all.

If you have access to land and are interested in returning it to Indigenous Peoples, begin building relationships with the community to initiate the process. If you live in Seattle, you can make rent payments to the Duwamish Tribe. If you live in the San Francisco Bay Area, you can make financial contributions to the Shuumi Land Tax, which directly supports the repatriation of Indigenous lands to Indigenous Peoples. And there's the Manna-hatta Fund if you live in New York. If you don't live in these areas, look for ways to support the tribes whose lands you reside on (and if you don't know who they are, go back to #1 in this list to find out).

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Read this article about the controversy over the Atlanta Braves “tomahawk chop” and name branding:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlanta_Braves_tomahawk_chop_and_name_controversy

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