

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?

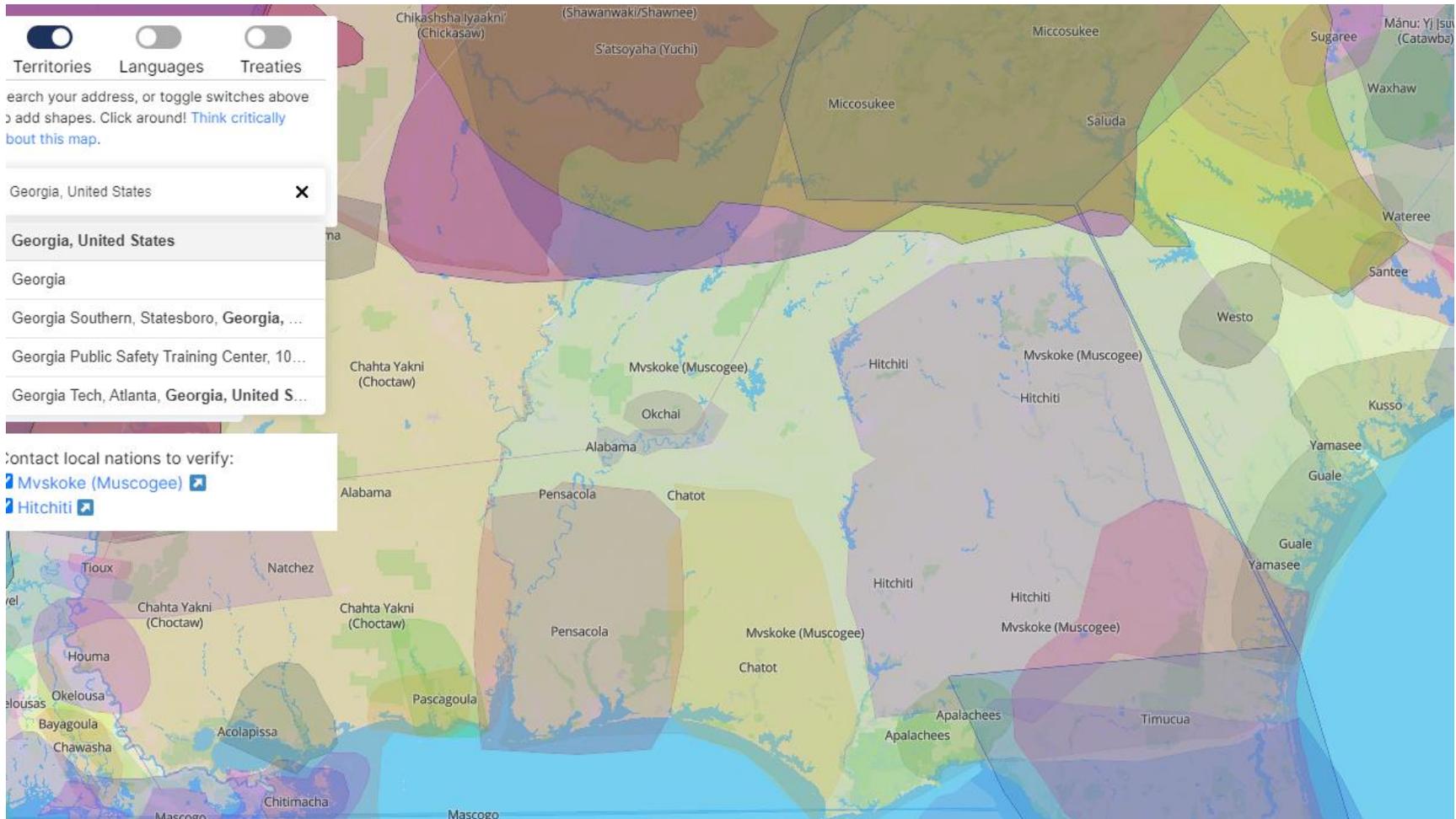
“[the] acknowledgment is intended to recognize the Indigenous peoples who have lived where we now work over the long span of human history and the large contemporary Native population that lives in the [area] today.”

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)**

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/>, <https://www.greenmatters.com/p/why-is-thanksgiving-bad>, <https://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/library/celebrating-thanksgiving-respectfully/>, <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/entertainment/g41530302/famous-native-americans/>



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

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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

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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.

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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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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Pros and Cons of Thanksgiving (and what we can do to combat those issues!):

PROS:

- Family Time
- Lots of delicious food
- 4 day work week 😊
- Special family traditions
- Football!

CONS:

- Offensive to indigenous people
- Glorifies colonialism, slavery, and epidemics
- Printed misinformation for centuries
- Consumerism holiday
- Excessive harm to animals during these months

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How can we celebrate appropriately without cause more harm?

- Shift Focus

- Focus less on the origin story and more on what the holiday has become. This has the benefit of connecting the holiday to tangible elements in the children's' lives. We can do that by talking about being thankful or discussing how traditional foods vary from family to family.

- Acknowledge the land and the tribes

- The first Thanksgiving generally refers to a meeting between the Wampanoag tribe and the Plymouth colonists. However, the likelihood is that you are living in an area previously populated by a completely different tribe! This year, honor Native Americans by learning about different tribes and the people that are indigenous to where you live.

- Consider an alternative to Turkey!

- While this might seem absurd to a majority of Americans, we can create less of a footprint by changing up our "normal" Thanksgiving plate. Try a vegetable stir fry or tofu-based option. Maybe sweet potatoes instead? The choices are endless!

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Famous People who are apart of the Native American Indigenous American Culture:



Lauren Good Day (Arikara, Hidatsa, Blackfeet, Plains Cree)

Award-winning artist Lauren Good Day is famous for intertwining old traditions with modern culture. Her art has been featured at some of the nation's most prestigious shows, including Santa Fe Indian Market, Heard Guild Museum Market, and the Autry American Indian Arts Marketplace. She started her art career at age six with beadwork and Tribal regalia and then expanded into quillwork, ledger drawings, rawhide parfleche and clothing.



Kay Walkingstick (Cherokee)

Best known for her [majestic landscape paintings](#), Cherokee artist Kay Walkingstick is famous for incorporating various elements into her paintings that are viewed as being distinctly Native American like well-known chiefs, warriors and influential figures.

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Creed Humphrey (Potawatomi Nation)

A native of Shawnee, Oklahoma, and a graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Creed Humphrey is the current center for the Kansas City Chiefs in the NFL. In 2022, Creed was selected for the Pro Bowl and was part of the team that won Super Bowl LVII. Creed is a proud member of the Potawatomi Nation. "There's not a ton of representation with Native Americans throughout sports," Creed told [potawatomi.com](https://www.potawatomi.com). "So I'm very happy to be able to be a person that younger kids to look up to."



Jason Mamoia (Pawnee, Native Hawaiian)

Jason Mamoia is proud of his native heritage and talks about it every chance he gets, whether it's in front of the camera or on the red carpet. He is Native Hawaiian on his father's side. He is deeply involved in protecting his native land and most recently helped to protest the development of Mauna Kea, Hawaii's tallest mountain. He also identifies as Pawnee, from his grandmother's side.

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Quannah Chasinghorse (Diné/Lakota)

[Quannah Chasinghorse](#) is an Indigenous model and activist with a shared heritage of Lakota and Navajo ancestry. She is known for using her platform to support Indigenous sovereignty and sustainability. She made headlines at the 2022 Met Gala by combining contemporary looks with intricate Native jewelry and headpieces.



Gil Birmingham (Comache)

If [Gil Birmingham](#) looks familiar, that's because he's been a staple of film and television for decades. He's best known for his portrayal of Billy Black in the *Twilight Saga* film series and currently as Tribal Chairman Thomas Rainwater in the Paramount Network's [television series Yellowstone](#).



[Louie Gong](#) is an artist, educator and public speaker who was raised by his grandparents in the Nooksack tribal community. Although he is best known for his highly sought-after, hand-drawn custom shoes, Louie has received international recognition for his art. His latest project, [The Sasquatch Collection](#), in conjunction with Brooks Running and the Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement, pays homage to Indigenous lands.

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Tommy Orange is an American novelist and indigenous writer from Oakland, California. His first book, *There, There*, was a finalist for the 2019 Pulitzer Prize and received the 2019 American Book Award. The highly acclaimed book follows a dozen Native American characters whose lives converge at a big powwow at the Oakland Coliseum. He is a graduate of the MFA program at the American Indian Arts School.



Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk)

When Sharice Davids was sworn into the 116th House of Representatives, she made headlines by becoming one of the first Native American women elected to Congress, alongside fellow Native American Deb Haaland. She was also the first openly LBGTQ+ Native American woman elected to Congress. She is currently the representative for Kansas' second district, where public education and affordable higher education are two of her biggest interests.

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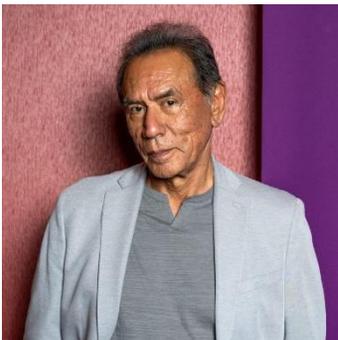
Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo)

Deb Haaland made history when she became the first Native American to serve as cabinet secretary in the United States Congress. But this wasn't the first ceiling she broke through. After running for Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico in 2014, [Secretary Haaland](#) became the first Native American woman to be elected to lead a state party. In Congress, she focused on environmental justice, climate change, missing and murdered Indigenous women and family-friendly policies.



Kent Monkman (Cree)

Visual and performance artist [Kent Monkman](#) is a Canadian First Nations artist of Cree ancestry and a member of the Fisher River band situated in Manitoba's Interlake Region. Known for his thought-provoking works which intermingle Western European and American history, Monkman explores the complexities of the Indigenous experiences in art form.



Wesley Studi (Cherokee)

Wesley Studi is a [seasoned actor and producer](#) with roles in award-winning films like *Dances with Wolves* and *The Last of the Mohicans*. His latest project is the animated show, *Spirit Rangers*, which follows the three Native American children who become park rangers with secret identities.

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Juane Quick-to-See Smith (Salish)

Juane Quick-to-See Smith is an [abstract artist](#) whose work has been featured in galleries and museums since the 1970s. Much of her art focuses on the destruction of the environment and governmental oppression of Indigenous cultures. Smith has had over 90 solo exhibits in the past 30 years. She has also organized and curated over 30 exhibitions and lectured at more than 185 universities, museums and conferences internationally.



Joy Harjo (Muscogee/Creek)

Joy Harjo is an American poet, musician, playwright and author who became the first-ever [Native American Poet Laureate](#) in 2022. Her flagship poem “American Sunrise,” tells the struggle between the contemporary world and Indigenous identity.



Cheri Madsen (Omaha-Ponca)

Cheri Madsen is a [Paralympic wheelchair racing athlete](#) and is the first Native American female to win an Olympic exhibition bronze medal.

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John Herrington (Chickasaw)

In 2002, [John Herrington](#) became the first member of a Native American tribe to fly in space. His mission took him to the International Space Station where he honored his heritage by carrying six eagle feathers, a braid of sweet grass, two arrowheads and the Chickasaw nation's flag on a planned spacewalk. He is also a retired United States Naval Aviator and engineer.



Wendy Red Star (Apsáalooke)

Contemporary multimedia artist [Wendy Red Star](#) creates art that confronts the romanticized representation of Native Americans in the media. Red Star has exhibited in the United States and abroad at venues including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Portland Art Museum, Hood Art Museum, St. Louis Art Museum and more.



Sean Sherman (Sioux)

Sean Sherman, also known as the [Sioux Chef](#), is a James Beard award-winning chef who is known for bringing Native cuisine to the forefront of today's dining scene. Indigenous food identification, gathering, cultivation and preparation are all part of his culinary programs to bring traditional foods to the masses.

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Temryss Lane (Golden Eagle Clan, Lummi Nation)

Temryss Lane is most famous for her soccer skills on the field, playing both professionally and internationally. In addition to being a well-known [sports journalist and analyst](#), she frequently speaks on culturally specific solutions that address challenges to wellness within Indigenous communities.



Winona LaDuke (Anishinaabekwe, Ojibwe)

In 1996 and 2000, [Winona LaDuke](#) ran for vice president as the nominee of the Green Party of the United States, on a ticket headed by Ralph Nader. She is the executive director of Honor the Earth, a Native environmental advocacy organization that played an active role in the Dakota Access Pipeline protests.

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Resources to advocate for the NAIA community:

- Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota

<https://www.pineridgereconciliationcenter.org/>

<https://sdsynod.org/ministries/multicultural/>

A word from a fellow congregational member: “They welcome donations in general, but also have a special need to help people stay warm through the winter months through the **Energy Matching Fund**. I checked the weather report and this Friday the high will be 33 degrees and the low will be 13. It will not be long before that would be considered a mild day.”

- Minority Opportunities in Athletics Association (MOAA)

<https://www.naia.org/rise/moaa>

- Redbud Resource Group

<https://www.redbudresourcegroup.org/>

- Native Child Advocacy Resource Center

<https://www.nativecac.org/>

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