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BRUCE
county

Bruce County Indigenous Reconciliation Framework

June 2024



Warden's Message

Today, many organizations and people are seeking ways to embrace and act on reconciliation. Bruce County is among those embarking on this journey. We are committed to reconciliation, as outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as “an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.”

When we began our reconciliation journey, we came to understand that truth comes before action, and that reconciliation is not the destination, but about building long-term, meaningful, and sustainable relationships.

Bruce County is fully committed to continuing our journey of truth and reconciliation in a spirit of mutual respect and recognition. This Indigenous Reconciliation Framework sets out Bruce County’s commitments to reconciliation, the vision and principles that will guide us, and our approach to continuing a shared reconciliation journey. We invite all County residents and visitors to join us as we strive to be proud of the legacy we are building together.



CAO's Message

Our Indigenous Reconciliation Framework establishes our commitment to deepen our understanding of Indigenous histories, perspectives, world views and knowledge systems.

In our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, Bruce County outlined shared values and principles that guide our decisions and actions: **Service Excellence, a Welcoming Community, Good Governance, Environmental Stewardship, and Financial Sustainability.**¹ These same values and principles inform Bruce County’s approach to Indigenous reconciliation.

With humility, as an organization, Bruce County looks forward to a future of mutually respectful engagement, which will be taken in a manner consistent with the acknowledgement and commitments outlined in this Indigenous Reconciliation Framework.

The Reconciliation Framework is focused on what Bruce County can and will do to address the past and work together in partnership to define new and unique pathways to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and organizations in Bruce County.

Commitment

Bruce County acknowledges the Indigenous Peoples of Bruce County whose rights are recognized and affirmed in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We acknowledge that Indigenous Peoples have distinct rights, histories, languages, cultures, ways of being and knowing, and aspirations for the future.

We acknowledge with regret the history of colonialism in Canada, including how this has been expressed and manifested in Bruce County through historic and ongoing policies and injustices, and we are committed to addressing the harms and legacies of this.

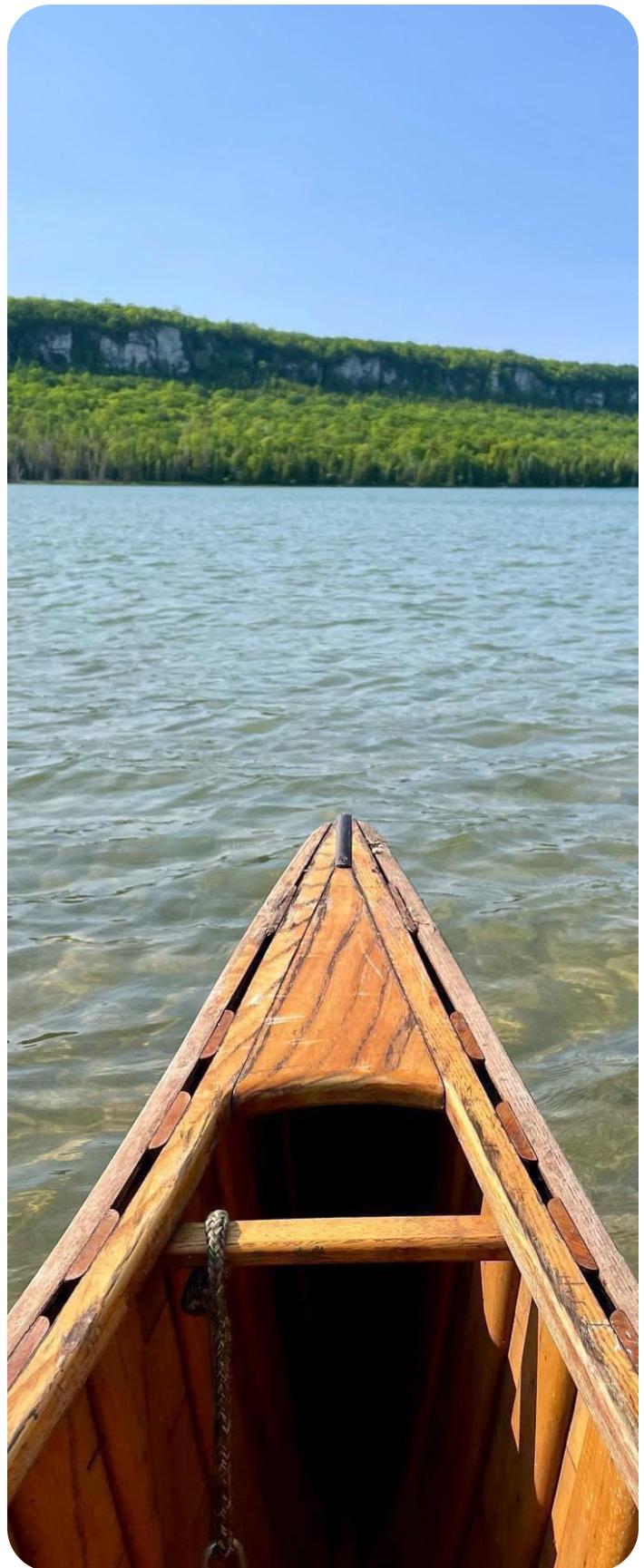
Bruce County is committed to a meaningful truth and reconciliation journey. Our goal is to foster reconciliation by renewing and strengthening relationships with Indigenous peoples and organizations within Bruce County.

We are committed to reconciliation, as outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as “an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.”

Through our ongoing Indigenous reconciliation journey, which includes continued education and learning, Bruce County will strive to promote deeper understanding of the distinct rights, cultures, histories, ways of knowing and priorities of Indigenous peoples and organizations. We will develop and define unique reconciliation pathways and actions with Indigenous peoples in Bruce County, informed by collaboration and partnership.

In all that we do as a responsible and responsive governing body, Bruce County is committed to meaningful inclusion of Indigenous voices, perspectives, world views, and knowledge systems. We are committed to honoring the unique and enduring spiritual relationships that Indigenous Peoples have with the lands, waters, animals, and all life in Bruce County.

We are committed to taking responsibility on behalf of Bruce County for leadership in our shared reconciliation journey, offering our friendship to Indigenous Peoples, and acting in the spirit of reconciliation, respect, good will, and integrity.



Our Reconciliation Journey

Actions Now

Since release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report and Calls to Action in 2015, Bruce County has been actively working to achieve a range of community outcomes supporting reconciliation. This has involved efforts to create spaces where truth can be shared and illuminated, and Indigenous histories and perspectives learned about and understood. This has helped to increase capacity within the County, and among leaders and employees to engage in reconciliation processes.

Bruce County has begun the next stage in our reconciliation journey and guided by this Indigenous Reconciliation Framework, will continue to act in ways that advance us towards our vision and goals.

The continuation of our reconciliation journey will also be consistent with Bruce County's Strategic Plan (2023-2026). The Strategic Plan is based on four strategic goals which guide County decision-making, priority setting and investment.

While we recognize there is much work to do to further our reconciliation journey, there are initiatives currently being undertaken by Bruce County that will make our County more respectful and responsive to Indigenous peoples and organizations.



Vision and Guiding Principles

Our vision is for lasting and harmonious relationships with Indigenous peoples, in which Indigenous cultures, languages, knowledge systems, worldviews, and perspectives are valued and acknowledged, and fully woven into the fabric of life in Bruce County.

Bruce County is committed to taking action to achieve our vision through a continuing reconciliation journey involving concrete actions and accountability for those.

We believe that reconciliation involves commitment and leadership, opportunities to establish and rebuild relationships based on trust and mutual respect, transparency, and accountability for action, as well as the investment of resources.

Bruce County will be guided in our continuing reconciliation journey by the following principles:

- **Truth** – Bruce County will be open to and welcoming of the truth, learning from the past, acknowledging it, and incorporating what is learned into County programs, services, policies, and initiatives with humility.
- **Respect** - Bruce County will be guided by respectful approaches to restoring and building relationships for the future.
- **Recognition** – Bruce County will recognize and be respectful of the distinct rights and interests, cultures, languages, histories and experiences of Indigenous peoples, and their aspirations for the future.
- **Responsibility** – Bruce County is for everybody; stewardship is a shared responsibility. Bruce County will be guided by Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, and expertise in design, implementation and evaluation of County programs, services, policies, and initiatives.
- **Collaborative Relationships** – Bruce County will consult and work in collaboration with Indigenous peoples and organizations. We will communicate openly and transparently about our actions.

Our Approach

Bruce County is committed to pursuing and embracing its relationships and exploring reconciliation pathways with Indigenous peoples and organizations. These relationships will appropriately reflect the distinct rights, cultures, histories, and experiences of Indigenous peoples throughout Bruce County's service area.

Bruce County's approach to reconciliation aspires to make space for acknowledging and responding to the specific aspirations, priorities, and circumstances of Indigenous peoples, as well as those who identify across diverse forms of connectedness.

Guided by this Indigenous Reconciliation Framework Bruce County will:

- Continue to ensure all County staff and leaders receive **cultural awareness training** and opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Indigenous peoples, and organizations, and distinct Indigenous histories, cultures, rights and relationships, and our shared history.
- Develop and implement, in collaboration with Indigenous partners, unique and specific **pathways to reconciliation** that are inclusive and aligned with the unique circumstances, aspirations, priorities and needs of Indigenous peoples and organizations in Bruce County, and that describe goals and specific actions that will be taken to achieve them.
- Promote responsibility and **accountability** for our commitments and actions by implementing monitoring and public reporting systems.

These actions will continue to move us towards our goals for strengthened relationships, truth telling and reconciling the past to move forward in the future.



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BRUCE
county

Administrative Centre

30 Park St., P.O. Box 70
Walkerton, Ontario N0G 2V0
Tel: 519-881-1291
Toll free: 1-800-265-3005
info@brucecounty.on.ca