

How Bruce County Uses the Saugeen Ojibway Nation Territory Acknowledgement

Note: We have intentionally set up this document outside the normal format of a policy or protocol, as is typical of many aspects of municipal business. This is done to emphasize that this guide is not a set of rules to be followed but rather building organizational capacity toward key aspects of our commitment to Reconciliation.

Bruce County has taken a deliberate approach to reconciliation, one guided by principles of truth, respect, recognition, responsibility, and collaborative relationships. We have waited to adopt a land acknowledgement until we could do so with integrity, and in alignment with our commitments outlined in our [Indigenous Reconciliation Framework](#), and [Saugeen Anishnaabek Reconciliation Pathway and Action Plan](#).

This document guides representatives of Bruce County on how to use the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) land Acknowledgement in a manner aligned with those principles. At all times, we want to ensure that we are authentic, intentional, and aligned with our commitment, and that the acknowledgement is not used in a performative way (i.e. an empty gesture).

Bruce County has adopted the land acknowledgement recommended by the [Saugeen Ojibway Nation Environmental Office \(SON EO\)](#):

I want to acknowledge the Traditional Territory of the Anishinabek Nation: The People of the Three Fires known as Ojibway, Odawa, and Pottawatomie Nations. And further give thanks to the Chippewas of Saugeen, and the Chippewas of Nawash, now known as the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, as the traditional keepers of this land.

In addition to providing a land acknowledgement, SON EO provides guidance on why territory acknowledgements are important, and what giving one should entail. This land acknowledgment should only be used after reading SON EO's guidance on the importance and role of land acknowledgments (there is a version of this acknowledgment for children at the end of this document).

When do we use the Land Acknowledgment

In addition to the guidance provided by SON EO, we want to provide some additional guidance on the usage of the land acknowledgement by Bruce County representatives. We use our adopted land acknowledgement:

- Spoken at the Inaugural meeting of Council, and when the chair chooses to do so with thoughtfulness, respect, and presence (the print version will be included in all Council agendas).

- At the beginning of public meetings (i.e. Environmental Assessment public meetings, planning public meeting, etc.), special events (i.e. the opening of a new building), other meetings as appropriate (especially on topics related to land, water, animals, culture, environment, equity, social justice, energy, and/or governance) and formal gatherings hosted by Bruce County (i.e. the Warden's banquet) or in partnership with community stakeholders.
- When representing Bruce County in external spaces (e.g., conferences, workshops, panels), especially on topics related to land, water, animals, culture, environment, equity, social justice, energy, and/or governance (this list should not be considered exhaustive).
- In written communications or documents, where appropriate, particularly when tied to reconciliation-related work. This should be considered on new signage being considered, and a variety of our communications channels (i.e. social media, website, media releases, etc.)
- At other meetings and events, when the usage aligns with the guidance provided in the remainder of this document (i.e. team meetings, etc.).

How do we use the Land Acknowledgment

SON EO's guidance on the use of the land acknowledgment reminds us that it is about "Recognition of [SON's] presence both in the past and the present." and that *"Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations."*

It is vital to understand that the land acknowledgement is not a script. It is a moment of respect, acknowledgment, and presence. We always need to be careful to use it with intention. It is important that we each know what we are saying, why it matters, and how it connects to the history, people, and land, water, and animals we are in relationship with. When done with this approach *"A land acknowledgement is a reflection process in which you build mindfulness and intention walking into whatever gathering you are having."*

When we do not use a land acknowledgment thoughtfully, with respect, and with presence we risk cause further harm to our relations with the people of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. When a land acknowledgement is used casually, automatically, or without reflection: it can be seen as hollow; just about the words; and disconnected from the commitments made by Bruce County. When this happens, it is tokenism and undermines Bruce County's integrity to the commitments we have made.

To meaningfully engage with and acknowledge the land each time we provide a land acknowledgement we should:

Start your Reconciliation Journey:

- Research the history of the land within the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, including treaties, active land claims and SON histories.
- Participate in The Path training, and other opportunities (from Bruce County, SON and on your own).
- Read and understand our commitments outlined in our [Indigenous Reconciliation Framework](#), and [Saugeen Anishnaabek Reconciliation Pathway and Action Plan](#).

First ask yourself:

- Do I understand what this land acknowledgement means?
- Is this the right time and space to offer it with care and respect?
- Am I prepared to link this acknowledgement to real action or discussion?
- Am I present and connected with my reasons for giving it?

We have made specific commitments with intention and care. When representatives of Bruce County deliver the acknowledgement thoughtfully, it reflects our shared commitment. If the answer is no, consider taking a moment to ground yourself and reflect on the above questions to bring yourself present with the acknowledgement. If after attempting to ground yourself the answer is still no that is ok Reconciliation is a journey. It is also an option to ask if someone else in the group is prepared to give the land acknowledgement.

It is important that we do not give a land acknowledgement just because we think we must or should. Reconciliation is not about getting the words right, it is about showing up with real commitment to action on reconciliation. If you are unsure whether to give the acknowledgement, it's okay to pause, reflect, or ask for guidance. This is a practice we grow into overtime.

Once you have connected with our reasons for giving it, we should then:

- Adapt it to the moment, when appropriate. It's okay to personalize briefly.
- Make sure it reflects the context or tone of the gathering.
- Pause. Breathe. Say it with clarity and sincerity. Give a moment for people to reflect.
- Ensure the work and your actions connect with our commitments in our [Indigenous Reconciliation Framework](#), and our [Saugeen Anishnaabek Reconciliation Pathway and Action Plan](#).

The acknowledgement should feel different depending on the context, whether it's a community celebration, a public meeting, or a team huddle. Using the same

words each time is not the problem. Using them without presence, understanding, or relevance is.

Making it Personal:

There is no template for this, and we also understand that it can feel awkward when you do not understand how to do this appropriately, so we are trying to provide some guidance to help you on your journey. Here are some ways to make it personal:

- Connect to the theme of the meeting and why that is important to our reconciliation journey: “As we begin this session on land use planning, I want to acknowledge the Traditional Territory of the Anishinabek Nation. It is especially important in conversations about land that we recognize the deeper histories and responsibilities tied to it...”
- Connect to your learning and growing understanding of Reconciliation and why that is important to the land acknowledgment: “In recent months, I have been learning more about the history of Day Schools in the area, and it has changed how I see my role as a public servant...”
- Connect to our changed relationship with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation: “We offer this acknowledgement out of respect, and our acknowledgement of our government-to-government relationship with Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and the Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation...”
- Invite the audience to connect with the land acknowledgment: “As we begin, I invite you to join me in taking a moment to reflect on the land we’re on, the history behind it, and what it means to be doing this work here...”
- Connect it to our commitments: “This acknowledgement is one part of how Bruce County is committed to reconciliation. But it’s only meaningful if we follow it with action, and that is why we are here to work on...”

Want to Learn More?

Ask your supervisor about opportunities to participate in training (i.e. The Path), explore our Reconciliation [resource page](#), and understand our [Indigenous Reconciliation Framework](#), and our [Saugeen Anishnaabek Reconciliation Pathway and Action Plan](#).

Land Acknowledgement for Written Formats:

There will be times when we will want to use a written version of the land acknowledgment that reflects our organizational commitment to Reconciliation. The

following acknowledgment is provided to be used in those circumstances. However, it should not be used without reflecting on the guidance outlined in this document.

Bruce County is located on the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, which includes the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and the Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation.

Bruce County Council and staff want to acknowledge the Traditional Territory of the Anishinaabek Nation: The People of the Three Fires known as Ojibway, Odawa, and Pottawatomie Nations, on whose ancestral, traditional and treat lands and territories we, our resident and municipal governments are located. And further give thanks to the Chippewas of Saugeen, and the Chippewas of Nawash, now known as the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, as the traditional keepers of this land.

In all that we do as a responsible and responsive governing body, Bruce County is committed to meaningful inclusion of Saugeen Anishinaabek world views and knowledge systems, and to honoring the unique and enduring spiritual relationships that Saugeen Anishinaabek 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, and acting in the spirit of reconciliation, reciprocity, good will, and integrity.

This acknowledgement reflects our commitment to truth and reconciliation, one guided by principles of truth, respect, recognition, responsibility, and collaborative relationships. You can read about our commitments in our [Indigenous Reconciliation Framework](#), our [Saugeen Anishinaabek Reconciliation Pathway and Action Plan](#), and our annual report on progress to these commitments. We also offer this acknowledgment our recognition of a long-standing government-to-government relationship with the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and the Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation.

Pronunciation Guide

The following provides a pronunciation guide on the for the Anishinaabek words used in this land acknowledgement:

Anishinaabek (ah-NISH-in-ah-bek)

Refers to the original peoples of the Great Lakes, often translated as “the people” or “good beings.” It is a collective identity that includes the Ojibway, Odawa, and Pottawatomie.

Spelling Variants:

- Anishinaabek (plural, eastern dialect) is commonly used in SON communications and in communities like Saugeen and Nawash.
- Anishinaabe (singular) refers to one person.
 - Note: You will sometimes see this word spelt “Anishinabek” which is an English simplification. Using two As is the most correct for our usage.

Ojibway (OH-jib-way) (also acceptable: O-jib-way)

A major nation within the Anishinaabek. The Ojibway are known for their extensive knowledge of freshwater systems, cultural resilience, and sacred connection to the land. Both Saugeen and Nawash are Ojibway communities.

Odawa (oh-DAH-wah)

Another Anishinaabek nation, historically allied with the Ojibway and Pottawatomie through the Three Fires Confederacy. While Odawa are not primary within SON, their kinship and trade relationships extend into this region.

Pottawatomie (pot-uh-WAH-toh-mee)

Part of the Three Fires Confederacy. The Pottawatomie share cultural, linguistic, and spiritual ties with Ojibway and Odawa peoples. Some Pottawatomie families have ancestral roots in southern Ontario.

Chippewas of Saugeen (CHIP-uh-wahs of SAW-geen)

One of two First Nations that make up the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. Located near Southampton

Chippewas of Nawash (CHIP-uh-wahs of NAY-wash)

One of two First Nation of SON, located on the east side of the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula.

Neyaashiinigmiing (nay-YAH-shin-ning-meeng)

Meaning “point of land surrounded on three sides by water” this is the Anishinaabemowin name for the lands of the Chippewas of Nawash.

Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SAW-geen OH-jib-way NAY-shun)

The political and cultural alliance of the Chippewas of Saugeen and Chippewas of Nawash. SON represents shared stewardship of the lands and waters of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation and is a legal rights-holder in matters of consultation, environmental review, and Indigenous governance.

It is okay to feel uncertain about pronunciation. What matters most is that we try, with respect. Pronouncing names correctly is part of showing respect of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation and its people. It is better to try, even imperfectly, than to avoid the acknowledgement out of discomfort, as that can be seen as ignoring the importance of these names.

If you are feeling unsure, you might say something like: *“I want to begin with a land acknowledgement. I have done my best to learn the correct pronunciation, and I welcome correction if needed, as part of my own reconciliation journey.”*

Land Acknowledgment for Children

Through all of time (*sweep arm slowly from left to right*), people cared for this land (*make a heart with hands*). They are the Anishinaabek, the good beings (*place hand gently on chest*). Made up of Ojibway (*hold up one finger*), Odawa (*hold up a second finger*), and Pottawatomie (*hold up a third finger*). They are called the Three Fires (*bring all three fingers together*).

Here in Bruce County, we give thanks to the Chippewas of Saugeen (*raise one hand*), and the Chippewas of Nawash (*raise the other hand*). Who together are the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (*join both hands together*).

They are the traditional keepers of the land. the waters, and all living things (*gesture around the room*). With open hearts (*hands over heart*), we say Miigwetch or thank you. And promise to care for this place together.