

<b>To:</b>	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	February 11, 2021
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	CCR-CW-03-21
<b>Title:</b>	Land Acknowledgement Policy
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Heather Morrison
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Kim Wingrove
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	None
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW41-21; Endorsed by County Council February 25, 2021 per Resolution CC24-21

## Recommendation

1. **That Report CCR-CW-03-21 regarding a First Nations Land Acknowledgement be received; and**
2. **That Grey County Council endorse the Land Acknowledgement Policy; and**
3. **That a formal ceremony be held with an invitation to Chief Lester Anoquot of the Saugeen First Nation and Chief Gregory Nadjiwon of the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation to attend County Council**

## Executive Summary

At the October 22, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting staff were directed to bring back a report that looked at options related to a First Nations Land Acknowledgement. This was subsequently endorsed by Council. County staff have reached out to both M'wikwedong Cultural Centre and The Chippewas of Nawash for assistance in options related to this and have developed a corporate policy that encompasses a number of Grey County events where a land acknowledgement may be appropriate.

## Background and Discussion

Land or territorial acknowledgements have emerged in several municipalities following the publication of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report in 2015. A land acknowledgement recognizes First Nations Peoples on whose traditional territories we work and live. These acknowledgements demonstrate the recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples, both in the past and the present and the contributions they have made to our communities and nation.

In 2018, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), established an Indigenous Relations Task Force that is to be a resource to assist member municipalities with creating traditional land acknowledgements “as a practice of reconciliation aimed at recognizing traditional or treaty territories of Indigenous peoples.” These statements are most often read at the beginning of Council meetings, municipal events and celebrations with others being read on an occasional basis only in order to continue for them to be meaningful and relevant.

Several municipalities within the province have implemented land acknowledgement statements. While there is no standard wording for these statements or consistent practice. The overarching need is for the acknowledgement to be genuine, with a commitment to acknowledge and educate people on the complex history of Indigenous people. Therefore, land acknowledgements should not be completed in isolation of other areas of consultation and education.

Grey County is home to the Anishinabek people of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation and includes the communities of Saugeen First Nation and Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. Parts of Grey County also include traditional territory for the Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat-Wyandot-Wyandotte people along with Metis. Several departments within the County maintain ongoing relationships with Indigenous communities including planning, social services, economic development, and housing relative to their respective portfolios.

Below are some examples of other stakeholders and community organization’s land acknowledgements:

Bluewater District Board of Education- “We acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe Peoples. I wish to recognize the long history of First Nations and Metis Peoples in Ontario and show respect to them today.”

Bruce Grey Public Health Unit- “We are meeting on the traditional territory of the Anishinabek Nation: The People of the Three First known as Ojibwe, Odawa and Pottawatomie Nations. And further give thanks to the Chippewas of Saugeen and the Chippewas of Neyaashiinigmiing (Nawash), now known as the Saugeen Ojibway Nation as the traditional keepers of this land. And recognize the traditional homeland of the Metis Nation.”

First United Church- “We acknowledge with respect, the history, spirituality and culture of the Anishinaabe peoples on whose traditional territories we gather and whose ancestors signed Treaties 82, 45 ½ and 72 with our ancestors. We recognize also, the Great Lakes Metis whose ancestors shared this land and these waters. May we all, as Treaty People, live with respect on this land, and live in peace and friendship with all of its diverse peoples.”

## Grey County Municipalities

Staff requested information through the local municipal Clerks to determine what Grey County local municipalities were doing related to land acknowledgements. Georgian Bluffs, Hanover, Meaford and West Grey have no such process in place currently.

Owen Sound has used two land acknowledgements in the past and they are used on an as needed basis. One of those is similar to the First United Church acknowledgement.

The Town of The Blue Mountains have a territorial land acknowledgement which is recited at the beginning of each Council and Committee meeting as follows: “We would like to begin our meeting by recognizing the First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples of Canada as traditional stewards of the land. The municipality is located within the boundary of Treaty 18 region of 1818 which is the traditional land of the Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee and Wendat-Wyandot-Wyandotte peoples.”

## Land Acknowledgment Policy

Rather than simply including a Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of every County Council meetings, staff thought that a more streamlined policy, covering various areas of County operations would provide a more meaningful process for the use of land acknowledgements.

In order to implement a land acknowledgement that not only recognizes the First Nations people, their history and ongoing contributions, a more formal ceremony with invitations being extended to both Chief Nadjiwon from the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and Chief Anokot from the Saugeen First Nation to attend and speak to the history of First Nations people in Grey County is recommended.

Grey County wants to acknowledge First Nations people with this statement and ensure that the land acknowledgement remains meaningful and sincere. The Policy recommends that a First Nations Land Acknowledgement is used in the following circumstances:

- Council/Committee of the Whole Agendas
  - the Inaugural Session of Grey County Council following the municipal election
  - Council Meetings where there is a Committee Report related to land matters including planning matters or sale or acquisition of land
- Corporate Documents
  - including but not limited to Corporate Strategic Plan, Official Plan or Official Plan Amendments, Forest Management Plan, Annual Budget and others as directed by the Chief Administrative Officer in consultation with the Warden and Clerk.
- Grey County Special Events
  - including but are not limited to opening of new exhibits at Grey Roots, naming or dedication ceremonies related to Grey County assets (roads, forests etc.), opening of new County facilities etc. Other Special Events as directed the by the Warden in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer and Clerk.

## Proposed Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect, the history, spirituality, and culture of the Anishinaabek, Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat-Wyandot-Wyandotte peoples on whose traditional territories we gather and whose ancestors signed Treaties with our ancestors. We recognize also, the Metis and Inuit whose ancestors shared this land and these waters. May we all, as Treaty People, live with respect on this land, and live in peace and friendship with all its diverse peoples.

## Legal and Legislated Requirements

There is no legal requirement for any municipality to implement a First Nations land acknowledgement.

## Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial considerations related to the implementation of a First Nations land acknowledgement statement.

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal-Planning
- External-Grey County municipalities, M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre, Communications-Chippewas of Nawash

## Appendices and Attachments

Land Acknowledgement Policy

# Corporate Policy

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## Land Acknowledgement Policy

**Approved by:** County Council

**By-law:** N/A

**Replaces:** N/A

**Section:**

**Policy:** 3-23

**Date Approved:**

**Last Revision Date:**

**Scheduled for Review by:** 2026

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## Policy Statement

A land acknowledgement statement recognizes First Nations Peoples on whose traditional territories we work and live. Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations. These relationships are key to reconciliation, a process to which Grey County is committed.

## Purpose

The purpose of a land acknowledgement is to demonstrate the recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples, both in the past and the present and the contributions they have made to our communities and nation.

## Scope

This policy will provide a corporate Land Acknowledgement and an overview of when Land Acknowledgements should be used relative to Grey County meetings, corporate documents, and other special events.

## 1.0 Definitions

- 1.1 First Nation Peoples original inhabitants of the land that is now Canada, and were the first to encounter sustained European contact, settlement, and trade.
- 1.2 Inuit means a member of an indigenous people from Northern Canada and parts of Greenland and Alaska.
- 1.3 Metis means people of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, and one of the three recognized Aboriginal People in Canada.
- 1.4 Saugeen Ojibway Nations means the First Nations People of the Chippewas of Nawash, Unceded First Nation and the Saugeen First Nation

## 2.0 Financial Matters

There are no financial matters related to this Policy

## 3.0 Internal Governance

### Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect, the history, spirituality, and culture of the Anishinaabek, Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat-Wyandot-Wyandotte peoples on whose traditional territories we gather and whose ancestors signed Treaties with our ancestors. We recognize also, the Metis and Inuit whose ancestors shared this land and these waters. May we all, as Treaty People, live with respect on this land, and live in peace and friendship with all its diverse peoples.

Land Acknowledgements will be used in the following circumstances:

- 3.1 Council/Committee of the Whole Agendas
  - a) the Inaugural Session of Grey County Council following the municipal election,
  - b) Council Meeting where there is a Committee Report related to land matters including but not limited to: planning matters or sale or acquisition of land
- 3.2 Corporate Documents including but not limited to Corporate Strategic Plan, Official Plan or Official Plan Amendments, Forest Management Plan, Annual Budget and others as directed by the Chief Administrative Officer in consultation with the Warden and Clerk.
- 3.3 Grey County Special Events including but not limited to opening of new exhibits at Grey Roots, naming or dedication ceremonies related to Grey County assets (roads, forests etc.), opening of new County facilities etc. Other Special Events as directed by the Warden in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer and Clerk.

### Forms

None