



Oregon Coast Community College Native Land Acknowledgement: The Basics

The Oregon Coast Community College Board recently approved this Native Land Acknowledgement recognizing the collaboration between the college and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians. The short version of the Native Land Acknowledgement is:

Oregon Coast Community College acknowledges that we reside within the ancestral homelands of the Yaquina (Yaqo'n) and Alsea (Wusi'n) Tribes. Today, those tribal descendants are represented by The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. We are honored for the opportunity to teach, learn, and work on their ancestral lands. We also recognize the ongoing contributions they make to the community, Oregon Coast Community College, and the world.

What is land acknowledgment?

Land acknowledgment is a movement happening in several countries (the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, etc.). Part of this movement involves a verbal acknowledgment of the traditional Indigenous inhabitants of the land at which an event or gathering is held. As just one example, all public schools in Toronto, Canada, open their day with a statement of acknowledgment, and many institutions of higher learning around the world have made it part of their practice. If you have attended meetings or lectures hosted by other colleges and universities, you may already have heard a land acknowledgment statement.

How is a Native Land Acknowledgement used?

A statement is often read or recited out loud as part of opening comments, displayed on documents, set as part of email signatures, or posted on organizational and personal websites. This statement honors native traditions of beginning gatherings with gratitude and connection.

Why do we use a Native Land Acknowledgement?

We use a Native Land Acknowledgement for several reasons. We recognize that the land we stand on is and was the home of Native people. We honor the Tribe's contribution to this community. We open an invitation to consider how to live in relationship with each other on this land.

Is this a requirement?

No. This is a tool that can hopefully be implemented to honor the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians whose lands the College exists on, as well as to acknowledge and show respect both to the tribes' rich and painful histories and to their continued presence in and contributions to the Oregon Coast community. It is an invitation to learn and connect, not a requirement.

What are some important considerations when implementing?

It's very important that when the Land Acknowledgment statement is used, it is used appropriately. The practice of stating it before gatherings is a gesture of recognition, inspired by "Indigenous protocols for opening up spaces with reverence and respect." Care must be taken to pronounce names correctly, for example.

Also, important to consider is that this statement is only a first step, and that rote words may serve as an important reminder, but need to be coupled with further progress, education, and reconciliation. Oregon Coast Community College looks forward to continuing the type of restorative work that a land acknowledgment prefaces.

What are our next steps?

We hope that honoring Native communities becomes an ingrained part of the College's practice, and that through modeling this type of acknowledgement we can begin a process of self-education and growth. Inclusivity means more than a lack of discrimination; it requires consistent, visible effort to demonstrate: "you are a part of this community, you belong here." We hope that future work will build upon a foundation of recognition and respect.

Consider taking one action – speaking the land acknowledgment in class, and talk about why you did it, engage in conversation with an OCCC colleague about this, attend an Equity and Inclusion meeting, or add images or art to your courses.

Summarized in part from Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement by the US Department of Arts and Culture <https://usdac.us/nativeland>

Learn More:

Wilkinson, Charles. *The People Are Dancing Again: The History of the Siletz Tribe of Western Oregon*. University of Washington Press, 2012. (This book and more are available in the OCCC Library)

Land Acknowledgement: You're On California Indian Land, Now What?
<https://www.csusm.edu/cicsc/land.pdf>

Indigenous in Plain Sight: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3FL9uhTH_s

#HonorNativeLand: <https://youtu.be/ETOhNzBsiKA>

Guide to Indigenous Land and Territorial Acknowledgements for Cultural Institutions
<http://landacknowledgements.org>

Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call To Acknowledgement <https://centerracialjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Honor-Native-Land-Guide.pdf>

Tribal Land Acknowledgements - What they Are and Why We Need to Do Them
<https://embracingequity.org/blog/tribal-land-acknowledgements>

As land acknowledgments become more common, Indigenous people grapple with next steps
<https://www.opb.org/article/2021/12/08/as-land-acknowledgments-become-more-common-indigenous-people-grapple-with-next-steps/>

Beyond territorial acknowledgments
<https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>

[OCCC American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month Site](#)

[Equity & Inclusion - Oregon Coast Community College](#)

Long Version

Oregon Coast Community College acknowledges that we reside within the ancestral homelands of the Yaquina (Yaqo'n) and Alsea (Wusi'n) Tribes, who agreed to cede their lands to the U.S by treaty in 1855. Much of their homelands, as well as parts of Siletz, Salmon River, Nestucca Bands of Tillamook, and Siuslaw territories, were established as The Siletz Reservation for the many western Oregon Tribes to move into in accordance with treaty agreements and federal policy. However, these treaties were repeatedly violated, and those lands were forcibly taken from them piece by piece, mostly without compensation. Today, those tribal descendants are represented by The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. We are honored for the opportunity to teach, learn, and work on their ancestral lands. We also recognize and appreciate the ongoing contributions they make to the community, Oregon Coast Community College, and the world.

Short Version

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