



Indigenous Engagement

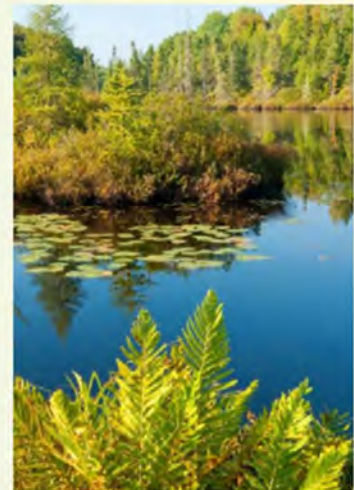
A Reference for Consultation and Engagement

This guide helps to provide support for: Cultural and Ecological Planning, Development Projects and Applications, Species and Natural Resource Management, Watershed Management and Shoreline Development Official Plan input, Stewardship, Education and Research, Partnerships and Collaboration

A History of Sharing

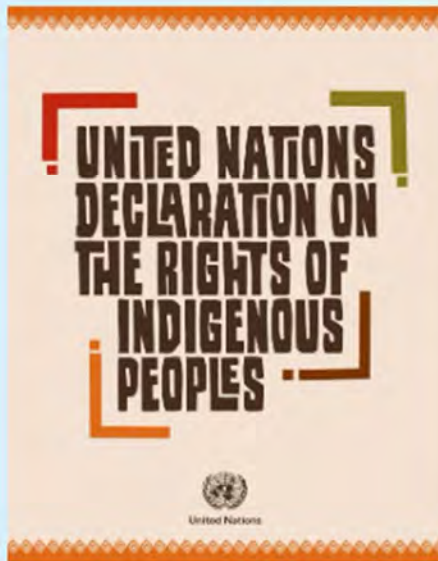
During the migration era of Indigenous people and early trade explorers the Anishnaabe opened Territorial boundaries, pathways, and waterways for learning, sharing and trading - and most importantly with a spirit of embrace and respect to neighbouring Nations, Territories and Explorers. This concept of openness is the foundation of our learning and principle of sharing today, and has resulted in the Ojibwa Nation being a forerunner, locally and throughout Canada, in the development of housing, education programs and of roadways to social reform of the infrastructure within today's First Nations.

Since time immemorial Anishnaabe ancestors have gathered and shared prophecy scrolls, wampum's, medicines and ceremonies that have enriched our lives and communities and those of visitors and allies. They have demonstrated their love and respect for this land in many ways. Their story (history) speaks of and reminds us of the Love for all of the Creator's gifts within the Circle of Life. We must use those teachings that were gifted in the present by practicing those principles in our day to day lives- and to share this Knowledge and influence our neighbors and future generations.



The recognition of Anishnaabe rites and responsibilities to preserve their culture in order to properly care for this land is understood and documented in International and National treaties and legislation and the benefits to greater society are known:

"Indigenous communities have kept their cultures alive by passing on their world view, their knowledge and know-how, their arts, rituals and performances from one generation to the next. Preserving their cultural heritage has also included speaking and teaching their own languages, protecting their sacred and significant sites and objects. It has also included defending and holding onto their lands and territories, since these are fundamental for sustaining them as peoples and cultures. Their cultures and traditional knowledge are increasingly seen as assets. It is important for the human species as a whole to preserve as wide a range of cultural diversity as possible....protection of indigenous cultures is vital to this enterprise. For development to be socially and economically sustainable, it must take into account and draw upon the values, traditions and cultures of the people in the countries and societies it serves. Indigenous peoples, perhaps more than any others, are aware of these relationships between culture and development (UN Publication: State of The Worlds Indigenous Peoples, Chapter II, pages 52; 76)."



The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13th, 2007, serving as a minimum standard for the protection of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. Therein it states : "Recognizing that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment." The Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA) called up all levels of government in Canada to endorse and implement UNDRIP. Within indigenous cultures can be found "ways of knowing" sometimes referred to as Traditional Knowledge. These "ways of knowing" provide a way of understanding environmental, social cultural and economic issues that because they have survived for thousands of years, have been resilient to colonialism; and provide guidance to the critical challenges facing all of humanity. As we grapple with the fact we are destroying our environment, exacting pressure on our social and cultural fabric while undermining the long term prospects of an economy that provides for our needs, **Indigenous cultural systems offer a crucial alternative and part of the solution.**

Engagement

Engaging Indigenous Nations and communities is the first step to any shared journey. It involves an exchange in cultures, therefore, for engagement to be successful the values of respect, honesty and humility need to be honored.

Engagement may be sought for activities from Official Plan input, cultural planning, project review to participation in projects, research, educational events or presentations. Engagement therefore

Process

A simple call or e-mail to Consultation Officers, a Band Office or Cultural Centre is a first step depending on your project or request. Often an online request form may be available and in other cases partners may be able to provide contact information and orientation.

For engagement to be successful, First Nations should be provided with all available information regarding needs and terms of a proposal or project as early in the process as is possible.

Fees for service and honorariums as well as expenses incurred may be applied to support the capacity for engagement.

includes, but is not limited to, notification of a project or information exchange in form of telephone calls, e-mail, information booklets, and/or meetings with First Nation staff or committees.

Engagement is a preliminary step that may or may not lead to consultation, but it is not consultation.

Use and sharing of Traditional Knowledge will be determined and in cases of research, projects or education a letter outlining the terms of use of this knowledge may be provided.

Education, Projects and Outreach

A common form of engagement is through sharing Cultural and Traditional teachings and experiences, from formal to informal gatherings, to workshops and presentations. Indigenous communities and Knowledge Holders are also invited to collaborate and cooperate on various social and government sector projects such as research and resource management because of the invaluable benefits that sharing Traditional Knowledge brings to society.



Education

Workshops and events may focus on language, Oral stories, day trips and participation in school and community forums. Honorariums and mileage are often requested for these events.

Crafts

Crafts are a holistic manifestation of our relationships with the spiritual, emotional, and natural worlds. Crafts are a way of understanding these relationships. Through crafts we share and learn. Stop in to Cultural Centres to experience culture through craft.

Projects

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Consultation

Consultation is separate to, but develops from Engagement. Consultation arises out of the 'duty to consult' from the Supreme court of Canada's ruling in the Tuku River Decision: Government departments, agencies or agents, or any proponent working on projects related, are required to inform and consult



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First Nation



Indigenous Nations regarding any proposed activity or project that may have the potential for adverse impacts on established or potential Indigenous Nation responsibilities and rights associated with those responsibilities, including Treaty rights. Land and resource management is both a responsibility and a right of Indigenous Nations. Importantly, the determination of these responsibilities, rights and any affects are to be decided by Indigenous communities. Should the potential affect be negative, Indigenous peoples need to be accommodated, provide input, and have impacts mitigated.



Process

1. Orientation

It is suggested that the proponent researches and understands which Traditional Territory, and which Indigenous Communities the project may affect. It is also suggested to familiarize yourself with the over-arching agreements, mechanisms, and minimum standards that provide for the responsibilities and rights of First Nations, and therefore with, at least, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Understanding these fundamentals is also assisted through the engagement process.

2. Engagement

The proponent or representative will first engage Indigenous Nations through phone calls, in some cases through on-line forms, and first meetings. This initial engagement allows the project or issue to be assessed in terms of Indigenous rights and responsibilities. Comprehensive details are to be provided for these assessments. The proponent may be asked to sign a full disclosure agreement or declaration. Indigenous engagement in these cases and consequent consultation will be at a level that is significantly deeper than that of the general public or other stake holders.

3. Consultation

If determined to be consultation by Indigenous communities, in cooperation with their Council so that a possible infringement of an Indigenous responsibility or right exists or the Nation has asserted a right, consequent meetings will be held. All consultations must be meaningful, transparent and conducted good faith with no predetermined outcome, no oblique motive and the absence of any appearance of any sharp dealings. A fee-for-service will be applied for consultations and depending on the depth of the consultation and needs, fees may also include research, travel expenses, honorariums for Knowledge Holders or other necessitated expenses which will be expressed through the process.

A letter will be drafted by a Nation community authority and provided to the proponent stating that Nation/community have been consulted. It is only through this evidence that a consultation with First Nations is confirmed. Note that through this process other agreements may be drafted and provided to the proponent.

Working together we can compile information for informed decisions, and create action plans and effective strategies.