
Acknowledgment of Traditional Territory in the Delta School District

A Guide for School District #37 (Delta)



Why do we Acknowledge Territory?

When opening an important event or function, we acknowledge the traditional territory of the local Indigenous people (First Nation, Métis or Inuit) who have occupied this land since time immemorial.

The Tsawwassen First Nation signed British Columbia's first Urban Land Treaty in 2009. The Musqueam Indian Band has 150 acres of territory in Ladner. We respect all of the Indigenous people who have not ceded the land in Delta nor have had any treaties signed.

How do we Acknowledge Territory?

Any school district staff or student can acknowledge the traditional territory. Only the Indigenous people who live on that territory or are originally from the territory would **welcome** people.

The host of the event is the person to acknowledge the territory. It is not necessary to have an Indigenous person from the territory do this.

For larger, more formal events, it is proper protocol to have an Elder or designate from the host Nation to perform an Opening or a Welcome, if possible.

Again, the host would acknowledge the territory and the Elder or designate would welcome the guests. Typically, an honorarium is given to the Elder for their time and their support.

When would we acknowledge territory?

It is performed at more formal functions such as:

- Assemblies - Board Meetings - Important meetings or presentations
- Graduations - Awards nights - Opening new facilities
- Celebrations which include Indigenous communities

What is the proper order of acknowledging territory and people?

1. Acknowledgement or Welcome is the first item on the agenda. *If you forget to do this first, just quickly do the acknowledgement when you remember and carry on.*

2. Order of introductions by level of government:

Indigenous Chief or designate
Mayor or designate
Trustees and/or other elected officials
Superintendent
Elders and other honoured guests

Accusé de réception du territoire



“Bonjour / après-midi / soirée.

Avant de commencer la _____ (c.-à-d. La célébration du soir), j'aimerais souligner le territoire traditionnel des Premières nations scəw' aθən məsteyəx^w ¹ (Tsawwassen) et x^wməθk^wəy' əm ² (Musqueam) et de tous les Salish côtiers qui ont été intendants de cette terre depuis des temps immémoriaux.

Je voudrais également offrir mon respect à tous les Anciens qui nous ont précédés et aux aînés et aux Premières nations qui sont avec nous aujourd'hui."

On peut également dire:

“Bonjour / après-midi / soirée.

Nous reconnaissons, respectons et honorons le territoire traditionnel des Premières Nations scəw' aθən məsteyəx^w ¹ (Tsawwassen) et x^wməθk^wəy' əm ² (Musqueam) et de toutes les populations parlant həŋqəmiñ əm' ³ qui ont pris soin de cette terre depuis des temps immémoriaux."

This introduction is flexible and doesn't have to be the exact wording here but something similar that is natural to you. The sentence about whose territory you are acknowledging is the important point. If uncertain, acknowledge the Coast Salish people here on the West Coast.

A special thanks to Laura Tait, Director of Instruction, Learning Services, SD68, who has provided information on acknowledging territory on her district website.

¹ scəw' aθən məsteyəx^w is the traditional spelling of Tsawwassen

² x^wməθk^wəy' əm is the traditional spelling of Musqueam

³ həŋqəmiñ əm' is the traditional spelling of Hun'qumi'num

Script for Acknowledging Traditional Territory



Good morning /afternoon/ evening.

Before we begin the _____(e.g. evening celebration), I would like to acknowledge the traditional territory of the scəw̓ aθən məsteyəx̓¹ (T s a w s s e n F i r s t N a t i o n) and x̓m̓əθk̓w̓əy̓əm² (Musqueam Indian Band) and of all the hən̓q̓əmin̓əh̓³ speaking people who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial.

I would also like to offer my respect to all the Elders who have gone before us and to all Canadians who are on the journey of Reconciliation.

This introduction is flexible and doesn't have to be the exact wording here but something similar that is natural to you. The sentence about whose territory you are acknowledging is the important point. If uncertain, acknowledge the Coast Salish people here on the West Coast.

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