



Planting the Seeds of Reconciliation

Across Canadian Urban Forests

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land in which we gather today is the traditional unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Wəlastəkwiyyik/Wolastoqiyik (WOOL-ah-sto-gway) Peoples. This territory is covered by the “Treaties of Peace and Friendship” which Wəlastəkwiyyik, Mi’kmaq and Passamaquoddy Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The Treaties did not deal with surrender of lands or resources but in fact recognized Mi’kmaq and Wəlastəkwiyyik title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between equal nations.

Today's Objectives

1. Identify collaboration opportunities with Indigenous communities and integrate their perspectives into urban canopy projects.
2. Explore the TRC Calls to Action and recognize the cultural and ecological significance of trees from an Indigenous perspective.
3. Understand how reconciliation can enhance municipal projects and commit to equity-focused, inclusive practices.



The Ma Matow Sakow Healing Forest

Translates to “The Miracle Forest” in Cree, the Ma Matow Sakow Healing Forest is a rewilding project in partnership with the City of Wetaskiwin, Alberta and guided by Elder Ivy Raine from the Louis Bull Tribe.

Transforming a 3.3 hectare former landfill into a living symbol of reconciliation, and will feature 6,660 culturally significant trees and plants.



Indigenous Worldviews on Trees and Forests: Pathways to Reconciliation



Archipel
Research & Consulting

About us



Archipel Research and Consulting is an Indigenous-owned company headquartered in the National Capital Region, with research associates based coast to coast to coast in both Canada and the USA.

We bring together a diverse team with the intention of bridging worlds of knowledge. Archipel's team members have years of experience working with Indigenous and newcomer communities.



Session Overview

1. Indigenous worldviews and our relationships to trees and the forest.
2. Introduction to TRC Calls to Action and Connection to Indigenous Relationship-Building around Urban Forests.
3. Deeper Dive: Group Reflection and Discussion.



Understanding Worldviews

Western:

- Western way of thought is anthropocentric (anthropology = the study of man)
- It is the belief that humans are the most important, or central, entity in the universe
- Anthropocentrism underpins capitalism and our drive for economic growth and environmental degradation

Indigenous

- The core: relational
- The concept of relationality believes that humans are only one part of a greater systems of our relations (one part of our ecosystem)
- We have responsibilities to all our relations

These two schools of thought are often incompatible



Terra Nullius & Land Use

- When Settlers arrived, they considered the land terra nullius (that no one owned the land prior to European assertion of sovereignty) and the Doctrine of Discovery became the foundation to Crown sovereignty, effectively eroding Indigenous presence from their territories.
- With the Crown sovereignty came colonial ideas of nature & ownership.
- Nature is other than human - they separate and distinct (for example provincial and national parks)
- Colonial Ownership has powers to divide the land and its purpose and use.



Resulting Dislocation

In the 1800s Indigenous people were forced onto reserves, northern communities, residential schools, sixties scoop, and other mechanisms with specific intention to dislocating Indigenous people from their lands. Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic...

- Duncan Campbell Scott, Canadian bureaucrat, 1920

CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS

Constantly at odds:

- The desire to view wilderness without Indigenous peoples
- Criminalization of land defenders

Example: In the 1996 SCC case *R v Van der Peet*, the Stö:lo Nation were denied the right to sell fish because Chief Justice Lamer considered them too low on the social development scale to have commercial rights because they practiced a sustainable system that relied upon active participation in maintaining the ecological balance



Introduction to TRC Calls to Action and Connection to Indigenous Relationship-Building around Urban Forests.



The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed as a means of reckoning with the devastating legacy of forced assimilation and abuse.

In June 2015, The TRC Report was released which included 94 Calls to Action to guide us to reconciliation.

Organizations in the forest and conservation sectors must actively contribute to reconciliation, supporting the rebuilding of place-based relationships with Indigenous communities and advancing their self-determined priorities, in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)



Reconciliation and Relationship



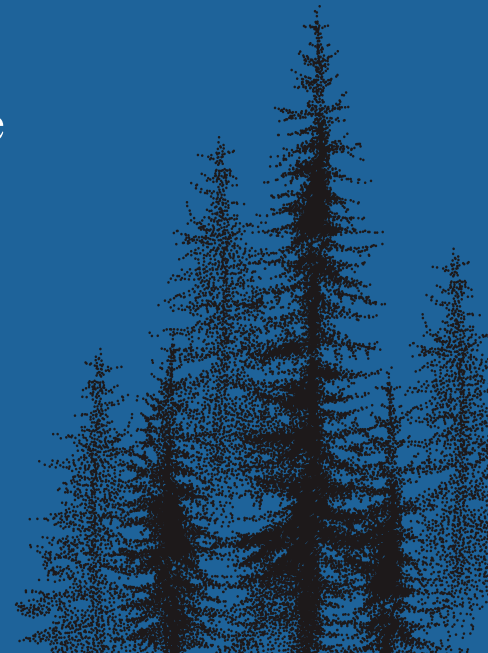
[Reconciliation] requires that the paternalistic and racist foundations of the residential school system be rejected as the basis for an ongoing relationship. Reconciliation requires that a new vision, based on a commitment to mutual respect, be developed. It also requires an understanding that the most harmful impacts of residential schools have been the loss of pride and self-respect of Aboriginal people, and the lack of respect that non-Aboriginal people have been raised to have for their Aboriginal neighbours. Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem; it is a Canadian one. Virtually all aspects of Canadian society may need to be reconsidered.

-Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, vi

UNDRIP and Its Relevance to Forest and Conservation Work



- Article 18:
- Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making processes affecting their rights, through representatives of their choosing.
 - Action: Forest and conservation organizations must ensure meaningful consultation with Indigenous communities whose rights might be impacted by resource management decisions.
- Article 32.1:
- Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities for the use and development of their lands and territories.
 - Action: Support the self-determination of Indigenous communities in forest management by partnering with them on land-use decisions that respect their priorities.



TRC Calls to Action

- TRC Call to Action 7:
- Develop joint strategies with Indigenous communities to eliminate educational and employment gaps.
 - Action: Forest and conservation organizations can create mentorship and training programs to support Indigenous youth in pursuing careers in environmental and forest management.
- TRC Call to Action 92.i:
- Ensure meaningful consultation and obtain the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with development projects.
 - Action: Any forest or conservation project should engage Indigenous communities early and often in the planning process, ensuring their participation is respected and that consent is obtained where necessary.
- TRC Call to Action 92.ii:
- Ensure equitable access to jobs, training, and educational opportunities for Indigenous peoples.
 - Action: Provide financial support and resources for Indigenous communities to access skills development, job training, and long-term employment opportunities within the forest sector.





DECOLONIZING OUR RELATIONSHIP

(Re)learning:

- How we see nature
- inherent natural power; agency; sacredness and connectedness
- Our concept of ownership
- We are in relationship with the natural world. Ownership is limited to a season and to the benefits that were shared.



GROUP REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION



Medicines

- Tobacco
- Sage
- Cedar
- Sweet grass



Contact Us



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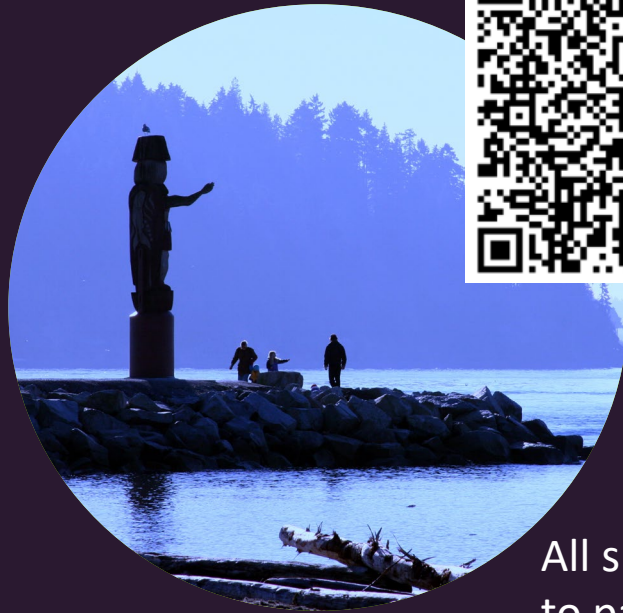


Thank you, Merci, Woliwon,
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Learn more

Building on the learning today, here are a few resources for you

[Read GMF's Advancing government-to-Nation relationships Factsheet](#)



[Learn more about GMF's Growing Canada's Community Canopies Funding Offer](#)



All slide decks, worksheets and links are available to participants at bit.ly/scc-learning

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