



## Land Trust Alliance of BC Statement on Indigenous Conservation and Engagement

Through all its work, the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia acknowledges and is grateful for all the original stewards of the land. Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples have inhabited, stewarded, managed and taken responsibility for the lands and waters we now call British Columbia, through Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural practices, laws and governance. Indigenous Peoples' relationship with the lands and waters of their territories still exists to this day. The history and continuing process of colonization by non-Indigenous people has caused fundamental harm and disruption to Indigenous ways of life, culture and relationship with their territories. We recognize that the work of land trusts relies on a colonial legal framework that uses tools such as exclusive land ownership, and that it is important for the land trust community to understand how our work affects Indigenous Peoples and their relationship with their territories in ways both positive and negative.

We believe that, as a community, we need to learn about, engage with and seek to understand the impact of our work on the Indigenous nations and communities in whose territories we work, and allow this knowledge to guide our actions, in order to honour our ongoing commitment to meaningful reconciliation with all Indigenous Peoples.

LTABC is committed to valuing differences, and learning how to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion in all of its work.

*Ethical space can be explained as a place where traditional oral practices and western written practices are paralleled, leveraging the strengths of the respective processes to co-create a safe place to design, develop, validate and work together in harmony, bridging the gap between cultures and activating meaningful reconciliation.*

There are three main areas that LTABC is focusing on to advance our Indigenous conservation partnerships:

- Working with Indigenous people and institutions to develop training for LTABC and land trusts that provides a foundation, focused on increasing knowledge of Indigenous histories, past and current experiences, and contemporary values, culture and protocols.
- Connecting and learning from Indigenous advisors and building relationships with Indigenous nations and communities in whose territories we work, to ensure our strategic direction and operational activities are aligned with Indigenous community priorities and encourage our conservation partners to do the same.
- Using our knowledge and experience to support Indigenous communities interested in exploring the land trust model to advance reconciliation through land conservation.