

# Seeking Meaningful Indigenous Engagement for BC Land Trusts

Indigenous Peoples are the original stewards and protectors of the lands, ecosystems, and biodiversity that land trusts across BC strive to conserve. Their connection and relationship with the Earth remains vital and strong to this day, as it has since time immemorial.

The Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia LTABC has been facilitating a series of Indigenous Engagement Workshops for land trusts. Local land trusts are actively seeking meaningful engagement with First Nations. You can learn more by contacting your local land trust directly. Some engagement techniques include:

- 1 Reaching out to local Indigenous communities, inviting relationship and trust building processes.
- 2 Researching what terminology the local Indigenous communities use to refer to themselves, (Indigenous, First Nation, Aboriginal, etc.).
- 3 Researching and learning about the local Histories and Stories.
  - Researching and applying any Indigenous names to the property (in consultation with local communities).
- 4 Researching and learning about Indigenous Ways of Knowing of the areas where you operate.
- 5 Creating signage that the property is on the territory of the local Indigenous communities.
- 6 Creating a space for communities to engage in sustainable harvests on the property.
- 7 Creating a space for communities to engage in ceremonies and cultural practices on the property.
- 8 Creating a space for traditional and/or medicinal herbs and plants to grow on the property.
- 9 Developing an organization-wide desire for meaningful Indigenous engagement.

## Why are Land Trusts supporting Indigenous Engagement?

- Out of commitment to reconciliation and in support of Indigenous place making.
- Indigenous communities hold a wealth of knowledge and experience with respect to stewarding and safeguarding species and ecosystems<sup>1</sup>. Their knowledge is complimentary and valuable in tandem with Western approaches.
- There is a legal Duty to Consult on all projects that may impact Indigenous rights or Treaties.

Meaningful engagement goes beyond a threshold response of consultation. It involves the conscious, practiced and continuous efforts by settler organizations and individuals to seek **sincere** relationships and partnerships with Indigenous groups, and for those efforts to be welcomed and reciprocated by the community.

BC land trusts operate on the traditional and contemporary lands of Indigenous communities. Land Acknowledgements are a popular way for settler organizations and individuals to express their recognition of this, and our engagement program moves that acknowledgement to action.

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<sup>1</sup> McDermott, L. & Bell, A., 2017. Indigenous Perspectives on Conservation Offsetting: Five Case Studies from Ontario, Canada.; Ontario Nature; Plenty Canada; Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences Program at Trent University.