

# How to Be an Ally of Indigenous-led Conservation

## THIS IS A PIVOTAL TIME FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN CANADA.

Indigenous Peoples are calling attention to solutions to growing crises on the land. Climate change, disappearing wildlife, and the ever-growing demand for resources, in addition to the legacy of colonialism in Canada, have combined to threaten our homelands and way of life. We are answering these challenges by supporting the creation of Indigenous Guardian programs and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas to continue taking responsibility for the health of the land, its wildlife, our Peoples and the Earth.

But we can't do it alone. Indigenous Peoples need allies to help secure long-term support for Indigenous-led conservation. We value and deeply appreciate your support.

Here is some perspective on how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can work together in a new approach to conservation—one rooted in Indigenous laws, science and relationships with the land. One that demonstrates reconciliation in action.

We are not trying to be prescriptive of others' actions. But we do have hopes and expectations for how we collaborate. This guidance is offered in that spirit.

## TRUST INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

This campaign is guided by Indigenous Peoples' vision for the land and waters. They are the true experts of their land and way of life and are best positioned to identify solutions that work for communities. Respectful partners will trust this vision and expertise.

## CREATE SPACE FOR INDIGENOUS VOICES

Make space for Indigenous voices and uplift them. Partners can play a role in amplifying these voices, but Indigenous Peoples' stories should be told by Indigenous Peoples. Foster more opportunities for Indigenous leaders to speak from centre stage.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LAND AND NATIONHOOD

Indigenous Peoples' relationship with the land is the core of Indigenous Nationhood. Indigenous Nations are increasingly reclaiming stewardship responsibilities over traditional territories. Supporting nationhood also means respecting this authority at the decision-making table.

## RECOGNIZE INDIGENOUS SCIENCE

Indigenous Peoples have developed highly specialized knowledge over thousands of years of caring for this continent. We encourage allies to learn about this body of Indigenous knowledge and science. And to value respectful dialogue across different knowledge systems.



## **PARTICIPATE WITH INTEREST**

Bring a good heart and a desire to learn. The history of colonialism weighs heavily on this country, but supporting Indigenous leadership, stewardship, and self-determination is a step towards reconciliation. Be an active participant in creating this story of strength and leadership together.

## **FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS**

This campaign is dedicated to expanding the positive work Indigenous Nations are doing to honour the responsibility to the land. Guardians and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas are proven models that keep lands healthy and strengthen communities. Support these Indigenous-led solutions and share news about their success.

## **SHARE STORIES WITH RESPECT**

This campaign is enlivened by the voices of Indigenous Guardians across the country. Please respect their ownership of their words. Watch our campaign videos, read our stories and share our posts. Please include proper attribution if you quote material. And contact us if you want to repurpose it.

## **CONTINUE TO LEARN**

Study the history of Indigenous Nations with traditional territories where you live and work. This education is a collective responsibility and Indigenous Peoples should not bear the burden for teaching others when many learning resources exist. Investing your time in understanding the context, history, culture, and vision of the Nations you partner with will help build strong, trusting and collaborative relationships.

## **INFLUENCE YOUR PEERS**

Talk with non-Indigenous friends and colleagues about Indigenous leadership on the land. And challenge positions that perpetuate stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples and miss the chance to highlight positive work and outcomes. This is one of the most important things allies can do: educate your peers.



[landneedsguardians.ca](http://landneedsguardians.ca)