

# Office of Indigenous Relations: Information & Resources

Treaties Recognition Week 2021

In 2016, Ontario declared the first week of November as [Treaties Recognition Week](#). This was created in response to the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#) to increase treaty awareness, and was the first legislation of its kind in the country. Treaties Recognition Week honours the importance of treaties and helps the public understand the significance of treaty rights, treaty relationships, and their relevance today.

November 1-5, 2021 marks the second year that the University of Waterloo is officially participating in Treaties Recognition Week. This year, the Office of Indigenous Relations is excited to offer various opportunities to strengthen our understandings of where we live and work, and the importance of treaty rights and relationships. Visit the Office of Indigenous Relations' [Treaties Recognition Week webpage](#) to learn more.

## What are Treaties?

Treaties are often regarded as sacred covenants between nations, establishing a relationship between those with ancestral roots in the land now known as Canada and those whose family roots lie in other parts of the world. Treaties can also be defined as legally binding agreements that outline the rights, responsibilities, and relationships of Indigenous nations and the federal and provincial governments.

Treaty rights and Indigenous rights are recognized and affirmed in [Section 35](#) of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and are also an essential part of the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), which the Government of Canada has committed to adopting. Treaties with Indigenous Peoples include both [historic treaties](#) and [modern treaties](#) (also called comprehensive land claim agreements).

## Honouring the Treaty Relationship

For thousands of years, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have lived on the land that is now known as Canada, each with their own distinct cultures, identities, traditions, languages, and institutions. Early partnerships between Indigenous nations and colonial governments were formed through treaties as well as trade and military alliances. These partnerships and agreements were based on mutual respect and cooperation. However, over many decades, these relationships were dissolved by colonial and paternalistic policies that were put into legislation. Treaties provide a foundation for living together and sharing the land that Indigenous Peoples traditionally occupied. They also lay the groundwork for continued cooperation and partnership as we move forward together to advance reconciliation in Canada. To achieve lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, it is key that we honour the treaty



relationship and negotiate new treaties based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership.

## What Does “We Are All Treaty People” Mean?

“We are all treaty people” emphasizes that all people, regardless of indigeneity, have treaty rights and responsibilities. Treaties are a foundational part of Canadian society. Every road, house, building, and business that exists today in a treaty area was made possible through treaties. In Ontario, there are more than 40 treaties and agreements covering the whole province. Most Canadians actually live in a treaty area and where they do not, they are living on [unceded Indigenous lands](#) (never ceded or legally signed away to the Crown or to Canada).

Interact with [Native Land](#) to explore the territories and treaty areas that you live on, visit, or work on.

Treaties are more than events and they are relevant every week of the year, not only during the first week of November. As we continue the journey of reconciliation, it is important for us to understand the significance of treaties and respect the relationships between this land and Indigenous Peoples.

Learn more about this topic by taking the free online course [We Are All Treaty People](#) from the University of Toronto.

## Treaties in Ontario

Ontario is covered by more than 40 treaties and other agreements. Treaties were signed in Ontario before and after Confederation. These treaties include:

- 3 Numbered Treaties (1870-1930)
- 2 Robinson Treaties (1850)
- 2 Williams Treaties (1923)
- 30 Upper Canada Treaties (1781-1862)

### Quick Facts

- The Indigenous population in Ontario is 374,395 (2016)
- Ontario is home to over 130 First Nations and Métis communities
- About 92% of people in Ontario live in the Upper Canada treaties area (2011)
- Over half a million people live in the six treaty areas in Northern Ontario
- About 3.7 million people live in the area covered by the Toronto Purchase

Learn more about treaties in Ontario by visiting [ontario.ca/treaties](http://ontario.ca/treaties).

Reference: Ministry of Indigenous Affairs. [Treaties in Ontario](#). 2018 (PDF).

## Online Resources

### Booklets

- [Land Rights: A Global Solution for the Six Nations of the Grand River](#) (PDF)

- [Six Miles Deep: Land Rights of the Six Nations of the Grand River](#) (PDF)
- [Treaties in Canada: Education Guide](#) (PDF) - A project of Historic Canada and Heritage Minutes

### Videos

- [Canadians have been breaking their promises to Indigenous people](#) – Filmmaker Tasha Hubbard narrates a history of Indigenous Peoples in the prairies and their relationship with the government, focusing on the events of the late nineteenth century
- [Heritage Minutes: Naskumituwin \(Treaty\)](#) – The making of Treaty 9 from the perspective of historical witness George Spence, an 18-year-old Cree hunter from Albany, James Bay
- [Indigenous Voices on Treaties](#) – A collection of videos of Indigenous speakers sharing their knowledge about the importance of treaties, treaty relationships, and rights in Ontario

### For Children

- [Kayak Magazine: We Are All Treaty People](#) (PDF) - Canada's History Magazine for Kids; This issue is about treaties and the historic treaty relationship between First Nations peoples and the British Crown, now represented by the government of Canada
  - [Treaties and the Treaty Relationship Educator's Guide](#) (PDF) - These lesson plans are framed on the Historical Thinking Concepts and offer teachers interactive instructional approaches that foster engaged student inquiry; Recommended for Grades 3 to 12
- [Treaty Education](#) – An interactive program created by Anishinabek Nation to help students in Grades 1 to 8 learn more about First Nations history, treaties, and Aboriginal rights
- [We Are All Treaty People](#) (Video) – A reading of [We Are All Treaty People by Maurice Switzer](#); Video created by Anishinabek Nation; Recommended for Grades 6 to 10

### Organizations

- [Idle No More](#) – An Indigenous women-led social movement for Indigenous rights and the protection of land, water, and sky; Founded in November 2012 among Treaty People in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta
- [Land Back](#) – The reclamation of everything stolen from the Original Peoples: land, language, ceremony, food, education, housing, healthcare, governance, medicines, and kinship
- [O:se Kenhionhata:tie \(Land Back Camp\)](#) - Located in what is now Victoria Park, Kitchener, this organization seeks to waive all fees for Indigenous communities to host events in public spaces; give back the land in Victoria Park and Waterloo Park to the Indigenous Peoples; urge cities to create paid positions, at all levels, for Indigenous Peoples to engage with the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples living on this territory; and push for cities to create Indigenous Advisory Committees