A Supportive Guide to Land Acknowledgements

This guide helps raise awareness about the history of Coast Salish People and the land where the City of Seattle is located. It also provides facilitative instructions on how and why to craft and deliver an attentive land acknowledgement statement. It is meant as a gateway to begin learning about the history of Indigenous Peoples and modifying our behaviors to acknowledge and respect Indigenous Peoples.
Table of Contents

Summary 4

1. Purpose and Scope 5

2. Land Acknowledgement Decorum 5
   2.1. What is a land acknowledgement? 5
   2.2. Why should we acknowledge the land? 6
   2.3. Who should lead the land acknowledgement? 6
   2.4. How should we acknowledge the land? 6
      2.4.1. Do It Respectfully and Mindfully 6
      2.4.2. Make It Meaningful 7
   2.5. Examples of Land Acknowledgements 8
      2.5.1. Northwestern University 8
      2.5.2. York University 8
      2.5.3. Ohio State University 8
      2.5.4. University of Washington 8
      2.5.5. An Example SAFS Land Acknowledgement 9
   2.6. What should we do next? 9

3. Coast Salish People Past and Present 10
   3.1. Historical background 10
      3.1.1. Salish Sea People 10
      3.1.2. Coast Salish 10
      3.1.3. Point Elliott Treaty 11
   3.2 Sovereignty and Fishing Rights 12
      3.2.1. Sovereignty 12
      3.2.2. Fishing Rights 12
      3.2.3. Institutional Review Board 13
   3.3. Federally Recognized Tribes 13
      3.3.1. Muckleshoot Tribe 13
      3.3.2. Tulalip Tribe 14
      3.3.3. Suquamish Tribe 14
   3.4. Duwamish People 15

4. Terminology 16

5. Training Opportunities 17
6. Acknowledgements

7. References
Summary

This guide provides context and best practices for drafting a land acknowledgement statement. It is not meant to replace the land acknowledgement statement officially recognized by the University of Washington, nor is it an exhaustive review of the information one may want to consider when drafting and delivering a land acknowledgement. This guide offers suggestions and ‘how to’ instructions for individuals interested in creating and engaging with a land acknowledgement. It is intended for settler-colonial individuals and organizations and is written for a non-Indigenous reader—with the understanding that Indigenous people can and do work and study at colonial institutions. More on the purpose and scope of this document can be found in Section 1.

This guide begins by describing the what, why, who, and how of land acknowledgement decorum (Section 2). The “how” part extends into respectful and meaningful aspects of a land acknowledgement statement, which recognizes the sovereign status of American Indian and Alaska Natives, their government-to-government relationships with United States federal and state governments, and their fishing rights.

The land acknowledgement statements from three universities in Section 2.5 highlight the continuous presence of Indigenous Peoples in our communities—their history and their traditional homelands. For instance, the UW land acknowledgement is a dynamic document based on the sovereignty of tribal nations. The guide also includes an example of a land acknowledgement that someone from the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences might deliver, and provides best practices for land acknowledgement decorum. A list of resources to continue learning about our relationship with Indigenous Peoples is included in Section 2.6: What is next?

Section 3, Coast Salish Sea People Past and Present, provides brief historical background pertinent to the tribes mentioned in the UW land acknowledgement. The content could be used as a reference to be expanded upon when drafting or presenting a land acknowledgement. Section 3 also includes relevant information about the Tulalip, Muckleshoot, and Suquamish Nations’ current communities and resource management programs, and relevant information about the Duwamish People.

Finally, this guide concludes with a list of terminology, training opportunities, and references to further explore and learn about Indigenous Peoples and tribal nations across the shared waters of the Salish Sea and beyond.

This guide is a living document and will be updated as needed. Suggestions are welcome, and any text herein may be subject to change according to the sovereign status of tribal nations and Indigenous Peoples. Please email the chairs of the Equity and Inclusion Committee at safsincl@uw.edu to provide feedback or request a time to discuss the content in this guide.
1. Purpose and Scope

One intent of a land acknowledgement statement is to honor Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of a geographic area and recognize the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their ancestral territories. In the larger context it underscores that we are uninvited guests and may have a narrow understanding of the historical and settler-colonial context in which urban centers have been developed and came to be. A land acknowledgement is not equivalent to or a replacement for respectful relationships with Indigenous communities, policy and action that supports Indigenous people, or reparations. A land acknowledgement alone makes no action towards addressing the issue of stolen Indigenous land, lives, and livelihoods. However, acknowledging these issues and linking a land acknowledgement to actionable efforts is a first step toward modifying our behaviors to address colonialism and the myriad of inequities that stem from this in order to improve our relationships with Indigenous Peoples, who have had long standing connections to the land and waters since time immemorial.

The background provided in this guide is only a brief historical overview of the Coast Salish people inhabiting this region before European settlers arrived. It is also used to create awareness and reflect upon the relationships we have with the colonial history of the land where many Coast Salish people live and where the City of Seattle and the UW Seattle campus now sit. It is not meant to simplify or minimize their experiences but rather to motivate a reflection of our relationship with Indigenous Peoples and the land, and to ultimately alter or modify our behaviors.

2. Land Acknowledgement Decorum

2.1. What is a land acknowledgement?

A land acknowledgement is an opening remark at an event (meeting, seminar, conference, workshop, etc.) that formally recognizes that the land on which an event is taking place is the homeland of specific Indigenous people. Its intent is to honor Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of a geographic area and to recognize the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their ancestral territories. It is a gesture that raises awareness of Indigenous people, who are too often erased from spaces and conversations despite their continued existence. A land acknowledgement can create awareness of the history of place, recognize the perpetual relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the land, and identify ways in which to modify our behaviors and actions to support and make visible Indigenous Peoples.

Many Indigenous communities from North and Central America traditionally acknowledge and give thanks to the land in the opening remarks of an event to honor their homelands and the connection with nature and ancestors. The cultural protocol for land acknowledgements varies by tribe or Indigenous community.
2.2. Why should we acknowledge the land?

One purpose of a land acknowledgement is to reflect on the relationship of the history of the land, city, and institutions to Native Americans. It raises awareness of Indigenous presence and their land and fishing rights related to everyday life gatherings. This is important because many Indigenous people are dispossessed of their traditional lands through colonialism, forced removal, and violence. A land acknowledgement emphasizes the continued presence of Indigenous people as members of the community.

In a broader context, it acknowledges all US Indian territory and the Indigenous world. A land acknowledgement builds consciousness of the vast presence of Indigenous communities in the world and their rights. UW is a settler-colonial institution. Settlers are uninvited guests who exist, work, and live on the traditional homelands of Indigenous Peoples. We are part of a colonizing people and speak a colonizer’s language, not an Indigenous language.

A land acknowledgement is not tokenizing; it is protocol. It is a way to talk about colonial history and its impacts. For example, in the early 1860s, Native Americans were not allowed to live within the Seattle city limits. Acknowledging our historical and present policies, practices, and partnerships with Indigenous people is one step in modifying them to be in line with our shared values.

2.3. Who should lead the land acknowledgement?

The person giving the land acknowledgement should be an individual or group of organizers or hosts of the event. At SAFS, this could be students, staff, postdocs, or faculty leading the event. Avoid calling on a token Native person outside of the host group to give the land acknowledgement.

It should be done as a mindful reflection with intent to honor and recognize local Coast Salish tribes and Native Americans past, present, and future, regardless of federal status.

2.4. How should we acknowledge the land?

2.4.1. Do It Respectfully and Mindfully

A land acknowledgement can mention not only federally recognized tribes but also other Indigenous groups. For example, the UW land acknowledgement mentions the Suquamish, Muckleshoot and Tulalip Tribes but omits mention of the Duwamish People.

The University of Washington acknowledges the Coast Salish peoples of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations.

A description of the Duwamish People’s current status as a non–federally recognized tribe and the implications of this could be mentioned as an extension of the UW land acknowledgement. However, it is also perfectly reasonable to use the current UW land acknowledgement without modification. Many Duwamish People are members of the three
federally recognized American Indian nations named in the UW land acknowledgement. More information on where the Duwamish People are in their pursuit of federal recognition can be found on the website of the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs. The pursuit of federal status of the Duwamish People can be contentious within and outside of American Indian nations.

The UW land acknowledgement is dynamic and based on real relationships between the University and sovereign tribal nations. The Suquamish, Muckleshoot, and Tulalip Tribes are federally recognized and have treaty rights with the US government. They are sovereign Nations and have fishing rights. The current UW land acknowledgement was developed in close consultation with these three federally recognized Native American nations, whose lands the UW Seattle campus sits on, as well as the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs. A land acknowledgement for the Tacoma or Bothell campuses would be different.

The sovereign status of American Indian and Alaska Native nations, based on the government-to-government treaties they have with the US federal and state governments, have been critically important to their resistance against genocide and assimilation, and are primary reasons why they have survived and thrive today. It is for this reason that the UW land acknowledgement was developed in consultation with, and explicitly names, these three federally recognized nations. However, these nations are themselves composed of multiple tribes. In addition, there are tribes or groups of tribes that are not currently recognized as sovereign nations by the US government, including the Duwamish People. The laws, politics, and history of federal recognition of Native American nations is both important and complex. We encourage everyone to learn more, and there are resources provided in this document to get started.

2.4.2. Make It Meaningful

Make a land acknowledgement statement meaningful by telling the audience about what local Native people are doing today. For example, mention self-determination, tribal economies, fisheries management and conservation projects, community events and fundraisers and how their work can be supported.[1-3]

In the case of the Duwamish People, they have the Real Rent Project and host cultural events at the Duwamish Longhouse & Cultural Center and Heron’s Nest Outdoor Education Center in West Marginal Way. They are looking for community support to make this area safer for visitors, since it is an industrial area with no sidewalks, and also to finalize purchase of the lands for the Heron’s Nest.

The Tulalip Tribe and Suquamish Tribe have museums and hold programs to revive their Lushootseed language among other public events. The Muckleshoot Tribe owns the Salish Tree Farm, Muckleshoot Seafood Products, White River Amphitheater, and the Salish Lodge. Just like other nations, tribal nations use resources from their economies to fund social services like health care for their citizens.

The tribes also invest heavily in their exemplary natural resource stewardship programs. In Washington State, federally recognized Native American tribes have treaty rights that recognize their sovereignty and they co-manage natural resources such as fisheries with the
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). They have their own inter-tribal fisheries agencies such as the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission (CRITFC).

More detailed information about the Tulalip, Muckleshoot, and Suquamish Tribes is provided in section 3.3, and information about the Duwamish People is in section 3.4.

2.5. Examples of Land Acknowledgements

2.5.1. Northwestern University

Northwestern is a community of learners situated within a network of historical and contemporary relationships with Native American tribes, communities, parents, students, and alumni. It is also in close proximity to an urban Native American community in Chicago and near several tribes in the Midwest. The Northwestern campus sits on the traditional homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires, the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa as well as the Menominee, Miami and Ho-Chunk nations. It was also a site of trade, travel, gathering and healing for more than a dozen other Native tribes and is still home to over 100,000 tribal members in the state of Illinois.

2.5.2. York University

We recognize that many Indigenous nations have long standing relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, and the Métis. It is now home to many Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the current treaty holders and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

2.5.3. Ohio State University

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion would like to acknowledge that the land The Ohio State University occupies is the ancestral and contemporary territory of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe and Cherokee peoples. Specifically, the university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greeneville and the forced removal of tribes through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. We want to honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that have and continue to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

2.5.4. University of Washington

The University of Washington acknowledges the Coast Salish peoples of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations.
2.5.5. An Example SAFS Land Acknowledgement

The following statement is an example land acknowledgement statement that could be used for SAFS events. It should be modified to meet the needs of the event and to underline any current local, regional and national events.

*The University of Washington acknowledges the Coast Salish peoples of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations.*

*The School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences acknowledges that we are uninvited visitors to their homeland, also the homeland of the Duwamish People, who continue to pursue their federal recognition.*

We recognize that Indigenous People were fundamental to the settlement of Seattle and continue to be central to our community and to the management of natural resources. We share their waters, their land, their mountains. We acknowledge that we live in an Indigenous World: a world for Indigenous Rights.

Our School recognizes the key role that federally recognized Coast Salish people have in managing salmon and other fisheries as sovereign nations and the coordinated government-to-government relationship they have with the US and Washington State governments, as a result of the Point Elliot and Medicine Creek Treaties and the Boldt decision (*U.S. v Washington, 1974*).

We want to honor the Tulalip, Suquamish and Muckleshoot nations’ efforts to revive their Lushootseed language, and invite you to learn more about their history, culture, and current community by visiting their nations’ websites. Their works on the environmental conservation and management of their resources are exemplary. Learn more about the Duwamish Longhouse and other projects related to the Duwamish River by visiting their website.

2.6. What should we do next?

For some, a land acknowledgement will be uncomfortable but can be the first step to learning more about the School’s relationship, as an institution, with Indigenous groups. It is important to know the Indigenous and colonial history of where we live, learn, and work and to reflect on our presence and participation in this relationship. Some books, videos, and web resources that can help you learn more are below.

**Books**

3. Coast Salish People Past and Present

This section covers a brief historical background of the Coast Salish people, the Coast Salish languages, and the Point Elliott Treaty. It also provides some historical background on four tribes in the area and information about current communities and involvement with resource management. This background is meant to help raise awareness and to help provide context for drafting a land acknowledgement statement.

3.1. Historical background

3.1.1. Salish Sea People

A multitude of thriving Native Americans were present throughout the area now known as Puget Sound before the arrival of white settlers; according to the Suquamish Tribe website, this region was one of the most populated areas north of Mexico City. Puget Sound tribes harvested and preserved food and traveled to various villages for fishing, hunting, and plant gathering during warm seasons (Spring and Summer). They lived in communal longhouses during the winter. The villages were interconnected by marriage, political agreements, commerce, culture, language, and common use of land.

3.1.2. Coast Salish

Coast Salish refers to a family of languages spoken in Western Washington and southwestern British Columbia. It includes two dozen distinct languages and several dialects. Lushootseed is the original language spoken by numerous Northwest tribes in Puget Sound.
Tribes like the Puyallup, Tulalip, and Suquamish have programs to preserve their Lushootseed language. The Salish Sea is named after the Coast Salish Peoples that have lived in the Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and Strait of Georgia since time immemorial (16-17). The Waterlines Project Map offers insight to place names in the Seattle region in the Southern Lushootseed language to “provide context to the ongoing presence and strong connections to the city for Indigenous people as co-managers of our shared resources.”

3.1.3. Point Elliott Treaty

In 1855 several Coast Salish tribes signed the Point Elliott Treaty with the US government to cede the majority of their land (Figure 2). The treaty at Point Elliott was signed near Mukilteo in January 22, 1855, by several chiefs: Sealth, chief of the Suquamish, Duwamish, and other tribes; Patkanim, chief of the Snoqualmie, Snohomish, and other tribes; Goliath, chief of the Skagit and allied tribes; and Chowitshoot, chief of the Lummi and other tribes. In the treaty, the US government was represented by Territorial Governor, Isaac Stevens; Secretary for the Treaty Commission, George Gibbs; Indian Agent for the Puget Sound District, Michael T. Simmons; and an interpreter, Benjamin Shaw (10, 18-22)

The tribes ceded 2.5 million acres of land for recognition and protection of their existing fishing and hunting rights, access to health care and education, and some monetary compensation, while the US government provided a small number of land reservations near their tribes’ villages. The Port Madison Indian Reservation was intended primarily for the Suquamish and Duwamish People. Although most of the Suquamish and many of the Duwamish People moved to the Port Madison Reservation, many others from the Duwamish People declined and asked for a separate reservation to be set aside at their homeland, between the Black and Cedar rivers. This petition was not granted, and a year later the Muckleshoot Reservation was established to accommodate more Duwamish People, though some Duwamish People at the time still remained in Seattle (10, 12, 18-22)

The Port Elliott Treaty established four reservations: the Port Madison, Tulalip, Lummi, and Swinomish Reservations (11). Between 1854 and 1855, other Indigenous tribes in Washington State also signed treaties with the US government (Figure 2). As a result of some of...
these treaties, multiple tribes obtained federal recognition. In Washington State, there are 29 federally recognized and seven non–federally recognized tribes. Among those not recognized are the Duwamish People located in Seattle (Figure 3) (23-25). As of April 2021, the Bureau of Indian Affairs recognizes 573 Indian entities in the US that are eligible for funding and services from the Bureau.

3.2 Sovereignty and Fishing Rights

3.2.1. Sovereignty

Federally recognized Indian Tribes have government-to-government relationships with the US government. The US constitution recognizes that the Native American tribal governments are sovereign governments and they regulate their own internal affairs. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) describes:

“Tribal governments maintain the power to determine their own governance structures and enforce laws through police departments and tribal courts. … In addition, Tribal governments are responsible for a broad range of governmental activities on tribal lands, including education, law enforcement, judicial systems, health care, environmental protection, natural resource management, and the development and maintenance of basic infrastructure such as housing, roads, bridges, sewers, public buildings, telecommunications, broadband and electrical services, and solid waste treatment and disposal.” (26)

3.2.2. Fishing Rights

In Washington State, the fishing rights of Native Americans were confirmed in 1974 by the Boldt Decision, a ruling of Judge George Boldt. This was upheld later in 1979 by the Supreme Court, and in 1994 it was extended to include shellfish (27-29). SAFS professor Dr. Richard Whitney was an expert witness during the hearings.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and federally recognized tribes in Washington State co-manage the state’s fisheries (30). Salmon and steelhead management involves the participation of state and tribal representatives in two public processes:

- Pacific Fishery Management Council
- North of Falcon

The Pacific Fishery Management Council manages groundfish and salmon fishing in the Pacific Ocean, while North of Falcon manages salmon in inland waters such as Puget Sound, Willapa Bay, Grays Harbor, and state rivers (30).
More detailed information about the Tulalip, Muckleshoot, and Suquamish Tribes’ fishery management is available in section 3.3, and about fishery management for the Duwamish People in section 3.4.

3.2.3. Institutional Review Board

Indigenous nations require that people who conduct research with them follow legal procedures, and research plans may need to be approved by a tribal council. Researchers who intend to work with human subjects (conducting interviews, etc.) will also need approval from the Human Subjects Division Institutional Review Board at the UW. Visit the UW Human Subject Division page for general information and to identify the correct IRB. Note: this document does not cover best practices for partnering with tribes on research, which is worthy of its own guide (e.g., Michigan State University’s Reciprocal Research Guide).

3.3. Federally Recognized Tribes

Learn more about what the Washington tribes are doing to preserve their culture, sustain the environment, and build and invest in their community. NCAI is another great resource to learn more about federally recognized tribes.

3.3.1. Muckleshoot Tribe

Background

The ancestral Muckleshoot villages had kinship connections that extended from the Duwamish watershed across other watersheds and east to the Cascade Crest. In December of 1854, the Puyallup, Nisqually, and Squaxin tribes signed the Medicine Creek Treaty. But in 1856 Governor Stevens and representatives of the Nisqually, Puyallup, and other tribes agreed to create an additional reservation at Muckleshoot between the White and Green rivers and to make changes to the Puyallup and Nisqually Reservations. In 1974, the US government recognized the Muckleshoot Tribe as tribal successors to the upper portions of the Duwamish bands’ part of Point Elliott Treaty and to the Upper Puyallup bands’ part of Treaty of Medicine Creek. Because of this, the Muckleshoot Tribe possess rights under both treaties. The Muckleshoot Nation has legal fishing access to Lake Washington and Lake Union.

Current Community

The Muckleshoot Reservation is located between the White and Green rivers southeast of the city of Auburn, Washington. “Muckleshoot” is derived from the native name of the prairie where the Reservation was settled. The Muckleshoot Tribe current community events and activities can be found on the Muckleshoot Tribe webpage, which lists multiple Facebook sites such as Muckleshoot Language and the library.

Natural Resources Management

The tribe is a member of NWIFC and Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), and both provide a variety of services to the Muckleshoot fishing community. In addition, their
Wildlife Program assists the management of game resources within the Point Elliot and Medicine Creek Treaty areas.

3.3.2. Tulalip Tribe

Background

The ancestral land of the tribes assigned to the Tulalip Indian Reservation extended to the Cascade Mountains, north to Vancouver Island, and south to Oregon. They inhabited parts of Whidbey and Camano Islands, the watersheds of the Snohomish, Skykomish, and Snoqualmie rivers, and the mainland shore from Mukilteo to the delta of the Stillaguamish River. Tulalip means “a bay shaped like a purse” or “small-mouthed bay”. The Tulalip Tribes are descendants of the Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Skykomish, and other allied bands of the Point Elliott Treaty.

Current Community

The Tulalip Reservation is north of Everett and the Snohomish River and west of Marysville. The Tulalip Tribe is the only one to establish a federally recognized city, Quil Ceda Village. It is an example of economic development to sustain tribal community and culture. Also critical for their culture is environmental preservation. The Hibulb Cultural Center and Natural History Preserve has permanent and temporary exhibits, a longhouse, classrooms, a research library, certified collections, an archeological repository, and a gift shop. Tulalip News keeps the community informed about current events and news.

Natural Resources Management

The Tulalip Tribes Natural Resources Department co-manages, protects, and restores their natural resources with extensive programs on fisheries, forestry, salmon hatcheries, wildlife, climate change, habitat restoration and research, and wetlands, among others. The Tulalip Tribe is also a member of NWIFC and ATNI.

3.3.3. Suquamish Tribe

Background

The Suquamish Tribe had multiple summer and winter villages across the Kitsap Peninsula. Their winter longhouses were communal and shared by many families. They were made of cedar planks and logs. The Suquamish people left their winter villages and traveled in canoes to hunting, fishing, and gathering areas during the summer. Suquamish means “place of the clear salt water” in southern Lushootseed.

Chief siʔaɬ (alternately spelled Sealth and later written as Seattle) was born on Blake Island. His father, Schweabe, was a leader of the Suquamish tribe of Agate Pass and his mother, Sholitza, was a daughter of the chief of the Duwamish Tribe. Due to his heritage, he was chief of both tribes at the time of the Point Elliott Treaty.
Current Community

Currently, the Port Madison Indian Reservation is home to the Suquamish Tribe with parcels in Indianola and Suquamish on the Kitsap Peninsula. The Suquamish Tribe funds language programs through the Suquamish Museum. Among their festivities is the Chief Seattle Days, where canoe races take place. Suquamish was the home of the Old-Man-House, the former home of Chief Seattle, before it was destroyed in 1870. The Suquamish Tribe established Port Madison Enterprises to develop community resources while promoting economic and social wellbeing through commercial activities. More current events can be found on the Suquamish Tribe Facebook page.

Natural Resources Management

The tribe is a member of NWIFC and ATNJ. Their Fisheries Department co-manages finfish resources such as salmon, halibut, herring, rockfish, and more. Other projects are related to the sustainable management of shellfish and protection of aquatic ecosystems. Additionally, their Natural Resources Department is responsible for water resources, forest lands, and trust properties.

3.4. Duwamish People

Background

In the Point Elliott Treaty, Native people living on Lake Washington and the Duwamish River were grouped together as Duwamish. Their ancestral territory covered what is now Seattle, Burien, Tukwila, Renton, and Redmond. They occupied Elliott Bay; watersheds of the Duwamish, Cedar, and Black Rivers; and Lake Washington, Lake Union, and Lake Sammamish. Duwamish in Lushootseed means “the people from the inside.”

The Duwamish People were granted federal recognition at the end of the Clinton administration in 2001, but this decision was overturned by the Bush administration soon thereafter. In 2015 after multiple appeals and filed petitions, the US government reached a final denial for their federal recognition due to their lack of continuous status as an American Indian entity.

In the absence of federal recognition, Native Americans like the Duwamish struggle to provide and obtain funding for services for their members. In 1983, the Duwamish People founded Duwamish Tribal Services, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that supports social, health, and cultural programs for their community. Many people with Duwamish ancestry choose to register in other federally recognized tribes to access health and human services.

Current Community

Nowadays, the Duwamish People are located in Seattle: their Longhouse and Cultural Center is situated in West Marginal Way across from a major archeological site, the village Ha AH-poos, where Duwamish People gathered shellfish from the original Duwamish River. While the Duwamish People continue efforts to restore their federal recognition, they accept
Donations to support their members. Read more about events and news on the Duwamish Longhouse Facebook page.

Natural Resources Management

The Duwamish People are founding members of the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition. They also collaborate with EarthCorps, King Conservation District, Seattle Parks Department and Duwamish Alive Coalition to restore the water and land of the Duwamish River watershed. Other environmental projects include the restoration of an area on the Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center together with the Seattle Parks Department. They are working with the King Conservation District on the development of a trail system to connect community destinations from West Seattle to Westcrest Park. The Duwamish are also a member of ATNI.

4. Terminology

Band: A small, egalitarian, kin-based group of 10–50 people that live together and are associated with a territory. Sometimes tribes are divided into bands or smaller groups that tend to live and travel together.

Tribe: Any group of people united by ties of common descent from a common ancestor, community of customs and traditions, adherence to the same leaders. A tribe comprises several bands that are politically integrated (often through a council of elders or other leaders) and share a language, religious beliefs, or other aspects of culture.

An Indigenous group that shares a common language, common beliefs, and who sees themselves as sharing a common heritage. In their own language, they often name themselves “the people.”

Nation: A group of people associated with a particular territory that possess a government uniquely its own. A nation is a sovereign entity with a unique political relationship with the US government.

American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN): Persons belonging to the tribal nations of the continental United States (American Indians) and the tribal nations and villages of Alaska (Alaska Natives). This terminology is used in federal policy.

Native American: All Native people of the US and its trust territories (AI/AN, Native Hawaiians, Chamorros, and American Samoans), as well as persons from Canadian First Nations and Indigenous communities in Mexico and Central and South America who are US residents.

First Nations: Indigenous peoples of Canada, who do not identify as Métis or Inuit.

Indigenous: Ethnic groups traced back to a particular place, who often depend on that territory but have been affected by colonization. Indigenous peoples exist throughout the world.
5. Training Opportunities

- Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs – training for faculty.
- lisaaksiicha Ross Braine (former Tribal Liaison and wǝɫʔałtxʷ – Intellectual House Director, OMAD) – training for SAFS Equity & Inclusion committee, and SAFS community, about one hour long.

6. Acknowledgements

This guide was primarily written by Isadora Jimenez-Hidalgo, PhD, in consultation with lisaaksiicha Ross Braine, former UW Tribal Liaison and wǝɫʔałtxʷ – Intellectual House Director. The document was edited and elaborated upon by Kim Yazzie, Eleni Petrou, Mark Sorel, Jennifer Gosselin, and the rest of the 2020–21 SAFS EI Committee. Additional edits were conducted in a revision by Staci Amburgey, Michael Martínez, and the rest of the 2021–22 SAFS EI Committee.

7. References


