

Native American History Month

Whose Land Are We On?

Tribes Associated with the ESC's Central Office Area

What is a Land Acknowledgement?

A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of the land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

Land acknowledgments do not exist in a past tense or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process and we should be mindful of our present participation in it.



Why are Land Acknowledgements Important?

Acknowledging the land from an Indigenous perspective is crucial for several reasons:

- **Cultural Respect and Recognition:** Indigenous peoples have longstanding connections to the land, often rooted in spiritual, cultural, and historical significance. Acknowledging the land is a way of honoring and respecting their deep relationship with it.
- **Truth and Reconciliation:** Many nations have histories of colonization, dispossession, and mistreatment of Indigenous peoples. Recognizing the Indigenous land rights and history is a step toward acknowledging past injustices and working towards reconciliation.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Indigenous communities often have traditional ecological knowledge about the land and its sustainable use. Acknowledging their perspective can lead to more environmentally sustainable practices and conservation efforts.
- **Cultural Education:** Acknowledging the land from an Indigenous perspective provides an opportunity for education and awareness about Indigenous cultures, histories, and contributions.
- **Community Building and Solidarity:** It fosters a sense of community, inclusivity, and solidarity by acknowledging and respecting the original inhabitants of the land. It can promote dialogue and partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Overall, acknowledging the land from an Indigenous perspective is a crucial step in acknowledging and honoring the histories, cultures, and rights of Indigenous peoples while also fostering a more inclusive and respectful society.



Whose Land Are We On?

Myaamia

Meaning the downstream people. Today you will hear this name pronounced Miami, a derivation of the traditional name. The United States government recognizes the Myaamia as a Sovereign Nation, originating from the Great Lakes region. Myaamia homelands lie within the boundaries of the states of Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, lower Michigan, and lower Wisconsin.



Kaskaskia

The Kaskaskia are an American Indian tribe that is no longer extant. They were once a part of the Illinois, a group of approximately twelve Algonquian-speaking tribes who shared the same culture. The Kaskaskia moved from Kansas to Indian Territory (present Oklahoma) as members of the Confederated Peoria in 1867. Today, their descendants are counted among the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma.



Shawnee

Throughout their history, the Ohio River Valley was the Shawnee's homeland where rich woods and prairies provided ideal hunting grounds and locations for villages. Some scholars believe the Shawnee to be descendants of the ancient Fort Ancient people, a cultural group living in southwest Ohio during the Late Prehistoric Period (ca. 900-1600 CE).

The Shawnee were a nomadic people, following animal populations throughout the winter months and establishing more permanent villages in the summers, where women gathered and tended to crops, while men hunted and served as warriors. Villages consisted of Wigiwa, or wigwams, wooden lodges constructed of bundles of saplings covered with tree bark.

When Europeans came to the Ohio Country in the mid-1600s, the Shawnee's way of life was disrupted by encroaching settlers, and they were often forced to leave their lands in search of unoccupied territory.



Hopewell

The Hopewell culture flourished in Ohio and other parts of eastern North America during the Middle Woodland Period, possibly as early as 100 B.C. We do not know what these people might have called themselves.

The people who are considered to be part of the "Hopewell culture" built massive earthworks and numerous mounds while crafting fine works of art whose meaning often eludes modern archaeologists. This "Hopewell culture" flourished between roughly A.D. 1 and A.D. 500. The name Hopewell "is not the name of any Native American tribe or ethnic group. It is an archaeological culture defined on the basis of similarities in artifacts and architecture," wrote Brad Lepper, curator of archaeology for the Ohio History Connection, in the book "Ohio Archaeology" (Orange Frazer Press, 2005).



Sources

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Experience Native American History In Person

Mound City Group

About an hour south of Columbus along the Scioto River in Chillicothe, this vast site was a ceremonial center of the Hopewell people. The Mound City Group at the park is a 13-acre rectangular area enclosed by earthen walls 3-4 feet high. Inside are at least 25 mounds of varying sizes framed by a large earthen enclosure shaped like a rectangle with rounded corners. Archaeologists have found indications that a ceremonial road once connected the Newark and Chillicothe sites - arrow-straight, 200 feet wide and 60 miles long. Artifacts found at the site come from as far away as Yellowstone and the Gulf Coast, indicating that this was central to a widespread culture. One-hour tours occur daily at 10 a.m. and are highly recommended as an excellent orientation to the culture.

Newark Earthworks

The Newark Earthworks are the largest set of geometric earthen enclosures in the world, all about 45 minutes east of Columbus. The site used to encompass most of Newark; however today, only a few sections remain. These sections include the Great Circle, the Octagon, and the Wright Earthworks. The Octagon Earthwork consists of eight walls, each measuring 5-6 feet tall and 550 feet long, enclosing an area of 50 acres. The earthworks were a ceremonial center and a calendar aligned with the 18.6-year lunar cycle.

Seip Mound

A few miles away from the Mound City Group within the Hopewell Culture National Historic Park, this National Park Service site includes an enormous burial mound that measures 30 feet high by 240 feet long by 160 feet wide. The mound covered a large, three-chambered ceremonial hall or "Big House." Inside the house, more than 100 people were laid to rest with some of the burials containing artifacts such as the clay face effigy and copper breastplates.

Serpent Mound

This awe-inspiring site is about an hour and 45 minutes away from Columbus, but worth the expedition. It's the largest effigy mound (mound shaped like an animal) in the world. Numerous artifacts have been found at the site, most pertaining to two different archaeological cultures: the Adena (800 BC-AD 100) and Fort Ancient (AD 1000-1500). The confusion around the date of the mound stems from varying radiocarbon dates from both the Adena and Fort Ancient cultures. Further research is needed to clarify the age of Serpent Mound.

Shrum Mound

Located within the city limits of Columbus, this mound stands 20 feet tall and 100 feet in diameter. Columbus was once scattered with hundreds of earthworks, but few remain - this is one of the best and easiest to access locally. Mound Street, in downtown Columbus, got its name from a prominent mound near the street's intersection with the High Street. Though the mound no longer stands, the clay from it was used to make the bricks that built many of Columbus' first buildings.

Ohio History Center

This museum near the Ohio Expo Center houses lots of artifacts from Ohio's past. The current exhibit about American Indians on display at the Ohio History Center focuses on the eight Hopewell sites that are part of the UNESCO World Heritage bid. The exhibit introduces visitors to the sites and exhibits selected artifacts from two of the sites that shed light on the types of activities that happened at these sites, in particular the practice of leaving ceremonial offerings.



Source: *6 Places in Central Ohio to Experience Native American History*
by Experience Columbus Staff

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