



TRANS CANADA TRAIL
SENTIER TRANSCANADIEN



Yos Pole, Malahat Nation, Cowichan Valley Trail
Carvers: Moy Sutherland (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation) and John Marston (Stz'uminus First Nation)
Photo Credit: Trisha Kaplan

TRANS CANADA TRAIL **COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION**

MARCH 2021

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1. PURPOSE

As with all organizations across Canada, Trans Canada Trail has a role to play in the essential act of reconciliation and relationship building with Indigenous peoples.

As a national trail organization, Trans Canada Trail works with many communities across the country, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Although Trans Canada Trail does not own or manage the Trail, we are in a unique position to partner with First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples in every province and territory, and to encourage local non-Indigenous trail groups to embrace acts of reconciliation.

This document is intended to inform our planning and decision-making processes, and make public our commitment to reconciliation. The actions we take will:

- Represent Indigenous peoples and communities on their terms. We will not be an “arbiter” of truth
- Increase representation of Indigenous people in our organization and encourage local Trail groups to do the same
- Amplify the voices of Indigenous peoples by supporting Trail initiatives that convey the culture and history of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and the land they live on; by encouraging and supporting the local Indigenous language on Trail signage; and by including Indigenous voices in Trans Canada Trail materials



2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The recognition of territory shows respect for Indigenous peoples.

It testifies to their presence, both historical and current, and ensures a sharing of knowledge between current and future generations. This recognition and respect are crucial to the establishment and maintenance of healthy and reciprocal relationships, and contributes to reconciliation, a process to which Trans Canada Trail is committed. While acknowledging traditional territory is highly desirable, it is only the beginning of the process that is needed to cultivate strong relations with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Trans Canada Trail acknowledges that:

- The Trans Canada Trail is situated on the traditional territory of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples from coast to coast to coast. Trans Canada Trail also acknowledges that the Trans Canada Trail includes land and water routes that were created and used, both historically and presently, by Indigenous peoples as seasonal travel and trade routes
- Our main office is situated on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) Nation, part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We recognize the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation as the custodians of the lands and waters of Tiohtiá:ke (Montreal), which has long been a gathering place for diverse First Nations, including Algonquin-Anishinaabe, Atikamekw and Huron-Wendat. We are thankful that we are able to create, collaborate, play and work here. We support community efforts to sustain a relationship with Indigenous peoples based on respect, dignity, trust and cooperation, in the process of advancing truth and reconciliation

To demonstrate our commitment:

- We support Indigenous leadership as they work on Trail development projects on traditional territories
- We encourage Trail groups to develop project partnerships with Indigenous communities, and to recognize and honour First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples by acknowledging the traditional territories on which the Trail project is taking place
- We have established an Indigenous Advisory Committee comprised of individuals from Indigenous communities to provide guidance and advice to Trans Canada Trail as it relates to Indigenous communities and culture



3. TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

3.1. Description

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was created as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and was active from 2008-2015. Its mandate was to facilitate reconciliation by informing all Canadians about the Indian Residential Schools (IRS). The TRC collected records and documented the experiences of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, their families and communities, and others affected by the schools. These experiences were shared through commemoration, community hearings, public engagement and education initiatives. Several reports were issued that documented a broad range of experiences and made recommendations to advance the process of reconciliation. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation was formed at the University of Manitoba and houses the statements, reports and other documents collected and created by the TRC. These reports and more information can be found [here](#).

3.2. Calls to Action

One key report produced by the TRC is the Calls to Action, a document urging all levels of government to work together to change policies and programs. Although they are directed to government, Trans Canada Trail acknowledges that reconciliation must be pursued from all perspectives (cultural, spiritual, political, economic, legal), and consequently these Actions can provide focus and direction for all organizations, including those outside government. The following Calls to Action are most relevant to Trans Canada Trail, and we strongly support and are committed to advancing these steps towards reconciliation. Each action is listed below, along with specific examples, and the area of reconciliation.



3.2.1. Language and Culture

Call to Action 14: We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:

1. 14 (i) *Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.*
2. 14 (iv) *The preservation, revitalization and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.*

TRANS CANADA TRAIL ACTION	EXAMPLE	RECONCILIATION
Encourage and support land acknowledgement on trailhead signage	2021: Land acknowledgement is being created for the trailhead in Fort Simpson (NWT)	Cultural / Spiritual
Encourage and support local Indigenous language and culture on interpretive signage	2020: Interpretive signs created in Dene Yatie were installed along the Trail in Hay River (NWT)	Cultural / Spiritual
Develop wayfinding signs in Indigenous languages	2020: The Great Trail wayfinding signs were created in Cree and will be installed in 2021 along the Trail in the Town of Devon (AB)	Cultural / Spiritual
Support sharing of Indigenous knowledge through Trail development	2020: Trans Canada Trail partnered with Pays Plat First Nation on the Stories of Pawgwasheeng Medicine Trail (ON)	Cultural / Spiritual / Economic
Work with Indigenous partners to provide educational opportunities to increase understanding of Indigenous history, culture and land-based knowledge	2017: Trans Canada Trail partnered with Ktunaxa Nation (BC) on researching history, interviewing elders, and developing content for eight educational signs along the Trail	Cultural / Spiritual
Trans Canada Trail will take seriously any raised concerns about the names of local trail sections along the network	No concerns have been brought forward.	



3.2.2. Professional Development and Training

Call to Action 57: We call upon federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism.

TRANS CANADA TRAIL ACTION	EXAMPLE	RECONCILIATION
Staff training in residential schools, history, rights, treaties, law, culture, art, politics, etc.	2019: Trail staff completed the Indigenous Canada Program (University of Alberta)	Cultural
Skills-based training for staff and Board	2020: Trail staff completed a course in Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples	Cultural
Implement youth skills program in Trail development	2020, 2021: Partnership with Outland Youth Employment Program	Economic
Trail operator training in Indigenous culture and history	2021: Trans Canada Trail will facilitate webinars for local trail operators, featuring experts in this area	Cultural / Political



3.2.3. Sport and Reconciliation

Call to Action 89: We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples.

Call to Action 90: We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples

TRANS CANADA TRAIL ACTION	EXAMPLE	RECONCILIATION
Commit to meaningful engagement and respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples	2019: ongoing partnerships with Indigenous communities, and development of the Indigenous Advisory Committee	Cultural / Political
Do research and reach out to First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities located along the Trail to ensure open communication	2020: Trans Canada Trail connected with ʔaąam First Nation to develop partnership	Cultural / Economic
Ensure equitable access to jobs and develop strategies to address unconscious hiring biases	2020: skills-based training to enhance understanding and review hiring practices	Economic



3.2.4. Business and Reconciliation

***Calls to Action 92:** We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources.*

TRANS CANADA TRAIL ACTION	EXAMPLE	RECONCILIATION
Work with Indigenous communities to route the Trail through their community if it is desired	2018: part of the Cowichan Valley Trail is on land owned by Malahat Nation, who were involved in its development and created the Yos Pole (see title page) along the Trail	Cultural / Spiritual / Economic / Political
Promote and support partnerships and engagement between local Trail groups and Indigenous communities	2020: Rossburn Subdivision Trail Association (MB) has engaged Waywayseecappo First Nation in Trail development and plans for future programming	Cultural / Spiritual / Political
Work with Indigenous communities on Trail activation	Support the development of programming by Indigenous communities along the Trail	Cultural / Spiritual / Political