

## Land Acknowledgement for “Love that dirty water” Data Nugget

We collectively acknowledge that the Merruasquamack (Merrimack River) watershed is located on the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of the Pennacock, Wobanaki, and Massachusett peoples. We also recognize the continuing presence of the neighboring Wampanoag and Nipmuc peoples. We acknowledge the history of genocide and forced removal from this territory and honor, respect, and celebrate the many Indigenous peoples still connected to this land and this community.

### Background

In the United States today, there are more than five hundred federally recognized Indigenous nations comprising nearly three million people. These people are the descendants of the fifteen million Native people who once inhabited this land. Most non-Indigenous Americans know very little, and are taught very little, about those who originally lived and thrived on the lands we now occupy – or about Native lives and cultures today. Learning about and acknowledging the people on whose land we live is one way we can begin to take responsibility for our country’s ongoing injustices against Native peoples. And it is a step that can be mind-opening and enriching for us.

Work with students to arrive at a working definition for what a land acknowledgement statement is, and its purpose.

Ask students:

- Who lived on the land we are on before European colonizers arrived?
  - This Interactive Lands map may be helpful: <https://Native-land.ca/>
- If we DO know, what do we know about those people?
- If we DON’T know, why don’t we?

*A **land acknowledgement** is a formal statement that pays tribute to the original inhabitants of the land you are on. The purpose is to show respect for Indigenous peoples and recognize their enduring relationship to the land. This is often done at the beginning of ceremonies, lectures, or any public event. It can be a way to recognize the history of colonialism and a need for change in settler societies.*

Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. Land acknowledgment alone is not enough. It’s merely a starting point. Going forward we must all do our part when it comes to dismantling colonization and seeing the world in a new light. How do you plan to take action to support Indigenous communities?