

Appendix D: Excerpt from Nature United’s Guidelines for Developing Communication Materials With/About Indigenous Partners (Draft October 2018)

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Overview

Nature United has developed Communication Guidelines to formalize our approach to communicating with and about our work with Indigenous partners. We developed these guidelines to ensure that all communications work that is led or initiated by our organization is done with utmost respect and transparency. These guidelines will be revisited and adjusted based on the new learning and insights that come along with working in partnership.

Our work in Canada advances conservation by supporting the leadership and authority of Indigenous peoples to steward lands and waters.

Our organization recognizes and respects the Indigenous peoples of Canada—First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nations—as the original rights-holders of the lands and waters in Canada. We are committed to gaining deeper awareness of the history and enduring impacts of colonialism, and to building partnerships based on reconciliation, as well as respect, equity, open dialogue, integrity, and mutual accountability.

As such, Nature United is committed to the following **foundational principles** in all communications related to our Indigenous partnerships and joint projects: Consent, Respect, Authenticity, and Reciprocity

Nature United has developed a framework (see right) to guide our communications work about joint projects with Indigenous partners grounded in the four foundational principles.

Nested under *Relationship* and *Communication Materials* are simple and clear processes for Nature United staff to work with Indigenous partners to specify goals, needs, and expectations with respect to communicating about joint work. Guidance is also provided for managing requests from external groups interested in developing communications materials.



Introduction

Purpose of Communication Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to formalize Nature United's approach to developing communications materials with and about our work with Indigenous partners and to establish clear and agreed-upon guidelines and procedures to inform how this work is undertaken.

We recognize that what we communicate, how we develop communications materials, and how we communicate about our shared work is a cornerstone of our trusted partnerships. If we fail at communicating respectfully, we fail these important relationships.

Context for Nature United's Work with Indigenous Partners

Nature United works to support the leadership and authority of Indigenous peoples to steward lands and waters. We focus our efforts on working with Indigenous partners to strengthen governance, build stewardship capacity, support emerging and existing leadership, and catalyze aligned economic development activity. Nature United's work is guided by a number of key framing documents, including:

1. ***Indigenous Rights and Nature United's Approach to Conservation*** (Appendix 6)
2. ***Nature United's Principles of Partnership with Indigenous Peoples*** (Appendix 7)

Together, these documents lay out the foundation for our approach to working with Indigenous partners in Canada. These documents are essential background reading to better understand the context for these ***Communications Guidelines***. Nature United recognizes that our communications guidelines must adhere to the core principles under which we work in partnership with Indigenous peoples.

Primary Audience

These guidelines are intended for internal use by Nature United staff, TNC Global staff, and other TNC contractors to reference when developing and formalizing relationships with Indigenous partners in Canada and/or when communicating about these relationships and collaborative projects.

The Overview of this document can serve as a simple and digestible summary of our approach that can be shared with Indigenous partners or, more broadly, with other organizations looking to develop or adopt similar communications guidelines.

Living Document – Learning Process

These communication guidelines are informed by the approach we take everyday to work in respectful relationships with our Indigenous partners. This is a living document and will continue to evolve as we learn together with our partners about how to communicate about collaborative projects with respect, mutual benefit and efficiency.

Companion Document – Nature United Style Guide

A companion document, **Nature United Style Guide**, provides language guidelines to support Nature United staff to use consistent and appropriate language in all our programmatic and communications materials with respect to our work in Canada and with Indigenous peoples, communities and partners.

For communications/style guidelines not covered in these documents, please refer to ***Elements of Indigenous Style* by Gregory Younging**. This is an excellent resource for writing about Indigenous peoples and provides valuable guidance related to portrayal of Indigenous peoples, cultural rights, appropriation and terminology.

Terms Used in Communications Guidelines

The following terms are used throughout this document, definitions are provided below:

Communications Materials

This refers to any materials that are led or initiated by Nature United to communicate for our purposes about a project or issue related to our projects. In most cases, the communications materials will be shared/distributed via Nature United's channels (e.g. website, newsletter). Internally, the development of communications materials could be led by the Marketing/Communications team, the Philanthropy team, or the Conservation team. Examples of communications materials include: blog posts, press releases, fundraising proposals, stewardship reports, and project evaluations.

In some cases, Nature United may support the development of communications materials led by Indigenous partners. We will still adhere to these Communications Guidelines but will also follow the processes set in place by the partners.

Indigenous Partners

This can refer to either individuals or communities/Nations (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) that Nature United is partnering with in order to advance shared conservation goals.

Partnership Agreements

These are agreements with Indigenous partners that define terms of partnerships with Nature United/Canada Program of The Nature Conservancy. The form varies widely, from a formal protocol agreement to terms in other agreements to shared workplans.

Communications Agreements

These agreements with Indigenous partners are usually contained within Partnership Agreements; and outline our shared communications goals, respective roles/responsibilities, community and donor recognition, and other requirements related to recognition. Our goal is to share these Communications Guidelines as part of every communications agreement with partners.

Community Lead

For each Indigenous partner that Nature United works with, there is a Community Lead on the Conservation team who acts as the point of contact. (This role is similar to that of a Relationship/Donor Manager, as used by the Philanthropy team.)

Guiding Principles for Developing Communication Materials with Indigenous Partners

In order to uphold our commitment to engage in enduring, effective, mutually beneficial and accountable partnerships with Indigenous peoples, we commit to implementing an approach to developing and disseminating all communications materials and products guided by the following communications principles.

1. Consent

Nature United will obtain consent from Indigenous partners or any individuals represented in our communications, whether quoted, referenced or visually represented, prior to publication. This includes a clear and transparent process for understanding the terms of consent, and obtaining and implementing consent.

2. Respect

Nature United will prioritize respect for Indigenous partners over all other communication objectives. This includes creating safe and open lines of communication, listening to partner needs and perspectives, and clarifying and honouring boundaries or conditions that partners and Nature United may set. We are also committed to establishing non-burdensome systems for planning, development and review.

3. Authenticity

Wherever possible, Nature United will develop communications centred around Indigenous partners telling their own story, in their own voice. We will always acknowledge the leadership and role of our Indigenous partners; and we will not claim ownership or or full credit for work done in partnership. We acknowledge that Indigenous peoples are the owners of any Indigenous knowledge that may be shared through our joint project work.

4. Reciprocity

Nature United recognizes that the development of communication materials often requires considerable time, energy and resources from our Indigenous partners. Nature United is committed to establishing non-burdensome systems to plan, develop and review communications materials. Nature United is also committed to supporting the communications priorities, needs and capacity of our partners related to our shared work.