

#LandBack

Indigenous people have always been at the backburner of any discussion when it comes to the land. The land, our Mother Earth, holds so much importance to our communities, which causes climate change to be a sensitive topic to us. Rising sea levels have led to salination of freshwater – affecting our food security and traditional medicines (Fund, 2019). Increasing rise in temperature affects our transport systems and negatively impacts the mental health of our isolated communities (Fund, 2019).

Indigenous people should always be at the forefront of any conversation when it comes to the land. Having a cultural understanding with the help of science allows us to build the proper connection to the natural world. With this, it allows us to know how to help the climate crisis and can even prevent it from happening further, but many do not want to listen to us. Indigenous communities are diverse. Each Nation has their own understanding of Mother Earth. Each has different knowledge on ways to help and protect her, why not listen to them?

Many of us have been screaming #LandBack, which tends to trigger many settlers. When we say this, we are not demanding for settlers to up and move, to essentially be ridden of entirely. The Land Back Movement “refers to the Indigenous-led movement to reclaim stewardship over traditional lands and ecosystems, protecting them for generations to come” (Nogueira, 2021). With this movement and the hopes of Land Back, we can restore Indigenous governance and land stewardship, providing a sustainable future.

Degradation continues to happen on the land as developments like pipelines and water waste plants continue to happen, causing cumulative impact to increase. Our entire knowledge is focused in sustainably, conservation, and reciprocity. We cannot take from the land without giving back to it.

Our representation is needed within any environmental decision making. How can the government focus on reconciliation if they refuse to prioritize our knowledge to what is most sacred to us? We are tired of being put on the backburner. We are tired of watching our Mother die due to the hands of colonization. How can anyone sit comfortably when the very thing that holds our Creation is dying? Playing with ignorance can only get someone so far.

Listen to Indigenous voices. Listen to us when we scream Land Back. Our resistance has stopped many fossil fuels projects already, imagine how many more we can stop if harmony between us is made. Why should only us be worried about this issue? Why are only a handful of settlers worried about our Mother dying? Our language, our cultures, our traditions, and our 'ownership' has been taken, but we refuse to let our land entirely die at the hands of ignorance and pride. Listen to us, work with us. Together we could end this.

*No one, absolutely no one, actually owns the land. Mother Earth belongs to no one particularly – but when those who decide to claim 'ownership' do not know how to care for her, then we must step in.

Examples of Land Back:

- Algonquins of Barriere Lake (2008): Moose Moratorium – a ban on moose hunting. This addressed concerns about the declining moose abundance within traditional Algonquin territory. An Indigenous-led blockade along a highway that accessed the moose habitat was started. This blockade was to demonstrate the urgency to protect the land and the moose living there.

- 1492 Land-Back Lane (2020): Caledonia, Ontario – road blockade since the summer of 2020. Protesters demanding any development on traditional land to be stopped. Land defenders tired of projects continuing on their land without their consent. Similar to the blockades that happened in Tyendinaga in 2019/2020. Can also consider the Oka Crisis in the 90's, where development was supposed to continue on sacred land as well.

Resources

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