

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES for Cross-Cultural Collaboration



## INTRODUCTION

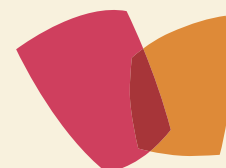
We are being called to work differently than we have in the past. After centuries of colonialism and injustices towards First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, we are collectively seeking to learn a new way of doing things that does not repeat or perpetuate the mistakes of the past. Work to protect, restore and conserve species and natural environments has historically discredited Indigenous Knowledge, displaced Indigenous peoples from their homes and territories and rendered illegal their very subsistence and livelihoods. We recognize this terrible history and agree that it is time to change.

We hope that the following principles provide the foundation for a new way of working rooted in reconciliation, healing and collaboration to protect, restore and conserve species and natural environments. The intentions of these principles are to:

- promote reciprocity and respect, which are the foundation for braiding non-Indigenous and Indigenous ways of knowing;
- create stronger conservation outcomes that recognize the importance of Two-eyed seeing, and other approaches to 'braiding' knowledge systems;
- ensure a role for Indigenous peoples and their Knowledge in stewarding their lands and territories, and in the field of conservation.

These principles are the result of thoughtful reflection and discussions between Indigenous Knowledge Circle and National Boreal Caribou Knowledge Consortium members about how to best work together across Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures, worldviews, and ways of knowing in the context of reconciliation. They incorporate the results of a review of guidelines and best practices from other organizations who have also developed principles for braiding knowledge systems and partnering across cultures. They build on the Indigenous Calls to Action for Caribou, developed by the Indigenous Talking Circle at the North American Caribou Workshop in 2018.

These principles form the core of a forthcoming toolkit for conservation-related collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners. The toolkit will provide practical guidance to support the implementation of the principles.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## **Recognition of relationships with caribou**

Recognize and honour the inherent significance of caribou to Indigenous peoples' identity, culture, and in some cases food security and food sovereignty. Indigenous peoples have a relationship to the land and their responsibility to care for caribou extends beyond the present: caribou provided for them in the past and will continue in the future.

## **Respect for land claims, treaties and recognition of the self-determination of Indigenous nations**

Recognize and uphold the nationhood, self-governance, and self-determination of Indigenous people, and acknowledge that these should be strengthened through Indigenous leadership of and involvement in land-based projects.

## **Relationships built on trust**

Take the time required to establish and maintain trust, as this is essential to forming good working relationships that allow collaborative projects to thrive. Collaborations work best when trust is established among all members of the partnership, including community members to bring a spirit of equality to the discussions.

## **Collaboration and shared decision-making**

Share decision-making with an acknowledgement that Indigenous peoples are equal partners in managing the resources they depend on. Engage in full partnerships that encompass social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions as well as the research/work that is being done. Collaboration begins with designing the project and continues through to completion, with relationships maintained even once a project has ended. Reconciliation forms the basis of good partnerships.

## **Transparency and accountability**

Share all motivations, intentions, and information with all parties from the outset. Clearly outline roles and responsibilities so that collaborators are accountable for collective and individual decisions and outcomes.

## **Open Communication**

Establish a process for frequent and ongoing communication between all parties, including all interested community members, which removes any language barriers between parties. Maintain good relationships by regularly updating community members who are not directly involved.

## **Reciprocity and shared benefits**

Create a collective project, where the benefits are shared by all. Embrace reciprocity with a commitment to giving all knowledge systems equal consideration, and building common ground to support mutual learning. Acknowledge that communities can be at a disadvantage due to lack of resources and capacity, and strive to balance power disparities between all collaborative partners.

## **Shared interest**

At the outset of a collaborative project, all members, including community members, should articulate and agree upon the goals, values and methodology. Recognize the community's priorities and ensure these are central to the project.

## **Adherence to the First Nations principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP®) for Indigenous data**

Ensure that Indigenous communities retain ownership of, control over, access to, and possession of their knowledge (including traditional knowledge), information, and data, and that they co-own any information from scientific research they help conduct, review, or provide feedback on.

## **Respect for and openness to Indigenous Knowledge, culture and perspectives**

Power differences exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and perspectives, which influence the outcome of conversations, research and any collaborative project. Recognize that Indigenous Knowledge systems and oral tradition are of equal value to Western knowledge systems and each system has its own methods of acquiring, validating and sharing knowledge.