



**DATE:** August 5, 2024

**TO:** Mary Ross Cunningham, Chair  
Diversity and Cultural Awareness Committee

**FROM:** Alyssa Firkus  
Director of Education

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend approval of a Resolution Approving a Lake County Forest Preserve Land Acknowledgement Statement.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED:** Communication, Education, and Outreach, Leadership, Public Access and Connections.

**FINANCIAL DATA:** There is no financial impact at this time.

**BACKGROUND:** A land acknowledgement is a respectful, powerful statement that recognizes the relationship between Native Peoples and their traditional territories. It is a way to honor the history and culture of those who were here first and acknowledge their continuing stories. The statement is a way for the District, which is the largest landowner in Lake County, to tell a story of human occupation and interaction with the land. It provides a meaningful tool to teach about the indigenous history of our area. The statement may be read before programs and public events, placed on signage in facilities and preserves, displayed at informational booths and listed on the District's website.

The land acknowledgement statement was created by District staff who consulted with the local Native community. This collaboration provided context for wording, naming the nations and understanding Native identity. In addition, staff researched the importance of land acknowledgement statements and Indigenous history by attending workshops and conferences and reviewing guides created by the Native community. This land acknowledgement statement is a living work that will continue to evolve, reflect new knowledge and ideas, and adopt the most respectful ways to honor those who came first.

**REVIEW BY OTHERS:** Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Director of Administration, Manager of Board Operations, Corporate Counsel.

STATE OF ILLINOIS     )  
                                  ) SS  
COUNTY OF LAKE     )

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT  
REGULAR AUGUST MEETING  
AUGUST 14, 2024**

**MISTER PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**

Your **DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE** presents herewith “A Resolution Approving a Land Acknowledgement Statement” and requests its approval.

**DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Roll Call Vote: Ayes: \_\_\_\_\_ Nays: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

**LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT  
LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING A LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT**

**WHEREAS**, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (“District”), the largest landowner in Lake County, acknowledges Native People as the original caretakers of the land ; and

**WHEREAS**, the District Board of Commissioners desires to make a Land Acknowledgement Statement that honors the history and cultures of those who were here first, acknowledges their continuing stories, and demonstrates its commitment to build respectful relationships with Native American communities;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners of the Lake County Forest Preserve District, Lake County, Illinois THAT:

**Section 1. Recitals.** The recitals set forth above are incorporated as part of this Resolution by this reference.

**Section 2. Approval of the Statement.** The Land Acknowledgement Statement, in substantially the form attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby approved (the “Statement”). The Statement may be used by District staff, as directed by the District’s Executive Director or their designee, which uses may include reading the Statement before programs and public events, placing the Statement on signage in facilities and preserves, displaying the Statement at informational booths, and listing the Statement on the District’s website. Nothing in this Resolution or the Statement will be deemed to grant any property or contractual right to any third party.

**Section 3. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

PASSED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

AYES:

NAYS:

APPROVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Angelo Kyle, President  
Lake County Forest Preserve District

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Gragnani, Secretary  
Lake County Forest Preserve District

Exhibit No. \_\_\_\_\_

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT**

**Formal Version**

The Lake County Forest Preserve District acknowledges Native people as the original caretakers of the land it now owns. We recognize the role we have as a land management organization, dedicated to preserving the land and history of northeastern Illinois and we desire to honor the first people.

District lands are the traditional homelands of the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi nations. Many other nations<sup>1</sup> have lived on, traveled through and welcomed others to this area. American Indian groups still exist today despite the historical and cultural efforts of forced removal. They maintain cultural traditions and call Lake County home today.

The Forest Preserve District strives to build respectful relationships with Native American communities by seeking knowledge from Native peoples and providing programming about Native cultures and opportunities to connect to the land.

**Shortened Version**

The Lake County Forest Preserve District acknowledges Native people as the original caretakers of the land it now owns. We strive to build respectful relationships and obtain knowledge from Native American communities today.

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<sup>1</sup> Tribes include: Ojibwe (ow-**jeeb**-way), Odawa (ow-**daa**-wuh), Potawatomi (pow-tuh-**waa**-tuh-mee), Miami (My-AM-ee), Illinois (IL-ə-**NOY**), Kickapoo (ki-kuh-poo), Peoria (pee-**or**-ee-uh), Meskawki (mess-**KWAH**-kee), Sauk (SAWK) & Fox (FOKS), Winnebago (Wi-nuh-**bay**-gow), Ho-Chunk (Ho-chunk) and Menominee (Me-**NOH**-muh-nee)