

IDEA Center for Public Gardens

2022 – 2023 Cohort Project Final Deliverable

Matthew Peterson, Botanic Garden Manager

Maria Thomas, Curator of Plants

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DRAFT



PROJECT NAME	IDEA Center for Public Gardens 2022 – 2023 Cohort Project Final Deliverable ABQ BioPark Draft Land Acknowledgement
COHORT MEMBERS	Matthew Peterson, Botanic Garden Manager Maria Thomas, Curator of Plants Laura Harris, ABQ BioPark Advisory Board Member and Executive Director of Americans for Indian Opportunity
PREPARED BY	Matthew Peterson
DATE	May 31, 2023

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Description of the Project

The purpose of this project summary report is to document the process by which the ABQ BioPark followed to draft a Land Acknowledgement.

There are twenty-three tribal nations who have connections within the State of New Mexico, we hope that by the City and ABQ BioPark honoring and using an Indigenous Land Acknowledgment we will begin to elevate and institutionalize Native/Indigenous Peoples as a living part of the City's memory.

The ABQ BioPark is in the draft development and review stage of a Land Acknowledgement.

What was the original criteria for project success?

The assignment for the February 9, 2023 Cohort Session: Indigenous Inclusion, (Part 1) was for each organization to draft a land acknowledgement, with instructions from assistant professor of American Indian studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and guest speaker Clint Carrol stating, "Formulate a draft land acknowledgement for your organization with your team. In your deliberations, consider previous content (this can include past workshops) and the additional resources provided (in QiQo Chat Library). As you discuss and develop your land acknowledgement, some questions to consider are:

- What is the intent behind this document?
- What work should precede and/or follow it?
- How would such a statement be displayed and employed at your organization?"

The City of Albuquerque supports the practice of land acknowledgement(s) in-order-to:

- Raise awareness of Native/Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life, for ourselves and meeting participants.
- Acknowledge our presence on the land as visitors and as a part of colonialism history.
- Recognize the history of colonialism and harms done by settlers to Native/Indigenous communities, including to acknowledge the detrimental impacts that governmental institutions have had on Native/Indigenous communities through discriminatory practices and disregard for Indigenous rights, traditions and knowledge; where decision-making that directly impacts Indigenous communities has ignored the rights of Native/Indigenous Peoples to be stewards of their own land; where there has been a lack of Free, Prior and Informed Consent from Indigenous communities with regards to natural resource or other projects that may affect them.
- Complement self-reflection and cultural competency of staff and volunteers.

What is the purpose of this project?

Cultural institutions and municipal governments, such as the ABQ BioPark, are taking a look at known challenges and implementing changes to better reflect community representation. The ABQ BioPark has been striving to further implement inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility through the implementation of its newly developed strategic plan and facility plan.

Acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples, land, and territory is an opportunity for the ABQ BioPark to acknowledge Indigenous history and culture and to recognize and show respect for the traditional lands occupied by the Indigenous peoples in New Mexico and especially the Pueblo peoples. A land acknowledgement is an important awareness builder and a reminder to the community whose land the ABQ BioPark is situated on.

Education is a central role of the ABQ BioPark. The ABQ BioPark's mission is to foster meaningful connections between people and nature. Furthermore, one of the four core values of the ABQ BioPark is titled "Our Community," in which the ABQ BioPark works to ensure that the BioPark reflects our community's diverse cultures, traditions, and values; community responsiveness drives our conservation work, program development, and relationships.

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

What methods worked well?

Knowledge gained and shared during the IDEA Center for Public Gardens session modules allowed the ABQ BioPark cohort members to develop a framework to formally acknowledge the significant cultural contributions the surrounding tribal nations have had on our culture and community and creating a path for acknowledgement of land ownership.

What helped you accomplish the project?

Beyond the IDEA Center for Public Garden sessions, the ABQ BioPark was fortunate to have Laura Harris, BioPark Advisory Board member also be a member of the ABQ BioPark's cohort. Laura's willingness to share her knowledge and expertise helped us to create a meaningful and authentic Land Acknowledgement specific to our region.

By keeping an open mind about our project and how it evolved was also helpful. As challenges with the initial project proposal began to develop, we were able to pivot into something more tangible and even more urgent to address. Considering where the ABQ BioPark is located, and how many of our exhibits feature elements of traditional cultures, it became clear that one of the most impactful things the ABQ BioPark could accomplish is to develop a Land Acknowledgement for our facility.

PROJECT CHALLENGES

What were the challenges you faced and how did you work through them?

The ABQ BioPark's initial project proposal was in retrospect, more than could be accomplished within a year, or by one staff team alone. While efforts are still being made on the initial project proposal, we also, through the course of the year, have developed better resources to accomplish such an ambitious project. It was important to accept the scope of our potential to have something deliverable within a year that also highlighted the ways in which the program influenced our project overall.

What's next for you?

Tribal nation representation and feedback are important next steps for the draft Land Acknowledgement. Evolution of and updates to the Land Acknowledgement over time are as equally important. The City of Albuquerque Office of Native American Affairs, Americans for Indian Opportunity, and Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps, among others, will be invited to provide feedback and tribal nation representation in an effort to continue to evolve the draft Land Acknowledgement. It is understood that Indigenous people shall be fairly compensated for their emotional labor when asked to review a Land Acknowledgement.



Upon the initial review and approval, the Land Acknowledgement should be spoken at the beginning of public and private events and gatherings and meetings hosted by the ABQ BioPark. Stating or publishing a Land Acknowledgment should be motivated by a heartfelt, authentic respect and support for Native/Indigenous peoples.

OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
Initial draft of Land Acknowledgement for IDEA Center for Public Gardens 2022 – 2023 Cohort assignment	ABQ BioPark IDEA Cohort members
Submission of draft Land Acknowledgement for review by Clint Carrol, assistant professor of American Indian studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	Clint Carrol, Mae Lin Plummer
Review of draft Land Acknowledgement by Laura Harris, Executive Director at Americans for Indian Opportunity	Laura Harris, ABQ BioPark staff
Review of draft Land Acknowledgement by Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps	ABQ BioPark staff, Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps
Review of draft Land Acknowledgement by City of Albuquerque Office of Native American Affairs	ABQ BioPark staff & City of Albuquerque Office of Native American Affairs
Review of draft Land Acknowledgement by ABQ BioPark Director, Department of Arts and Culture Director and Deputy Director	ABQ BioPark Director, Department of Arts and Culture Director and Deputy Director



DRAFT LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The ABQ BioPark acknowledges that we are located along the Rio Grande river, the original homeland of the Tiwa Pueblo Peoples and their neighboring Tribal Nations, which include the Apache, Comanche, and Navajo Peoples. Additionally, due in large part to the Federal policy of Relocation, Native Americans, representing 400 different tribes from around the country, make up over 1/10th of our state demographic. We take this moment to recognize and honor the Indigenous Peoples, past and present, that have protected and stewarded these lands, and the profound influence they have had on the rich cultural heritage that we as, New Mexicans are a part of. The BioPark acknowledges that many of the seeds we grow, the plants we use, and the stories we tell in our programs and exhibits are rooted deeply in the cultural traditions, knowledge, and land and water conservation practices of Indigenous people from the Southwest and beyond. We recognize these contributions with gratitude and acknowledge that we can continue to learn from Indigenous practices of land and water management, seed saving, food and medicine sovereignty, and traditional arts that are an integral part of present-day science and culture. Furthermore, we recognize the importance and responsibility in upholding the integrity of these practices and are committed to an ongoing and respectful relationship dedicated to supporting and elevating the Tribal Peoples who's lands we steward and who's knowledge we share with others.



References

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