

## Land Acknowledgement

Kwai Nedobak, Hello friends,

For four years we have gathered on zoom, greeting each other in a tick-tack-toe screen of videos, making decisions about the land we live on and the people we live with. We (The Vermont Climate Council) gathered from places far and wide, from hill and dale, and from many corners of Vermont. We join this meeting from the cities of Brattleboro, Montpelier and Burlington, the rural areas of Calais, Essex Town, West Hartford, Middlesex, Swanton, and Worcester, the glacial terraces of Wantastiquet, the Kingsbury Branch of the Winooski River and so many more places. Here is a collection of our words and reflections.

Today, we took time to step on the land in all of these places and, using every sense we had, we gave honor and acknowledged the beautiful land around us. The first thing many honored was the warmth of the sunshine on our faces and that no coats were needed.

Today, the land is breathing early spring, and the smell of the earth is brought to us by a mild north wind. The gentle breeze is everywhere. The Gluskobe and the Wind Eagle story reminds us that we need the wind, for things will shrivel and die without it because the sun is so strong. Today, we honor and acknowledge the wind and the sun and the balance they have found together. We are grateful.

Some cold spots remain covered in shrinking snow piles in Montpelier, Calais, and West Hartford. A poor man's fertilizer, it's sometimes called. These late snow falls contain and deliver nitrogen and other plant nutrients to the soil as the snow slowly melts. We honor and acknowledge the role and beauty of the snow that we still see on April 14<sup>th</sup> and how this cycle continues.

The gentle winds have brought us music today in the form of swaying trees, bird songs of many kinds, insects buzzing in the green grass, busy squirrels, a female bear exploring, a phoebe singing her famous song, and the brown crunchy leaves still here from last fall blowing in the wind. There is a view of three mallard ducks that dive and shake, cleaning themselves in the water. The splashing is a wonderful noise to behold. We honor and acknowledge all the sounds of the music we witnessed today. It is a true chorus - teaching us how to work with one mind and heart for the good of the earth.

Getting outside allowed us to feel and witness firsthand the cycles of seasons that the world around us is embarking on once again. We see the beautiful pale green and reds of the buds returning and the color of flowers: purple, white, yellow, green, and red. There is an almost spicy smell in the air from the new growth emerging. Last year's Queen Anne's lace seeds smell like coriander; smells are everywhere. The smell of the river waking up again is back and smells like life. A lone Canada goose sitting on a collection of stones in the middle of the river awaits a partner so their cycle together can continue too. There are different textures everywhere: fuzzy moss, smooth rocks, and rough tree bark - they all remind us that life continues. We honor and acknowledge these beautiful cycles and work to allow them to always be here with us.

We are also reminded of our work and why we have gathered today. The wispy cirrus clouds are dancing northward across the blue sky. There is a lot of pollution collecting against the mountains to the east. Cars and trucks are sliding up the slight incline of the road next to a former farm field. We see it, we smell it, and we taste the pollution. We grieve the changes and strive to return to a place of balance. Braiding together different diversities, knowledges, and patience to achieve our goals. We honor and acknowledge those who shared their wisdom before us, and we gather and hope for the strength to continue.

We also would like to take the time to acknowledge those that came before us. N'dakinna is the homelands of many various Abenaki tribes as well as that of the Mohican. We acknowledge those who had their homelands stolen from them, those who had their homeland abused but

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continued to care for the land. Despite all odds, they are here today and still working to continue to care for the land they love and call mother. Aki, the birthing place of all living things.

Ktsi wlini Ktsniwaskw (thank you creator!!)