

THE JOURNEY STARTS HERE

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LEARN

BEFORE YOU WATCH THIS SERIES....



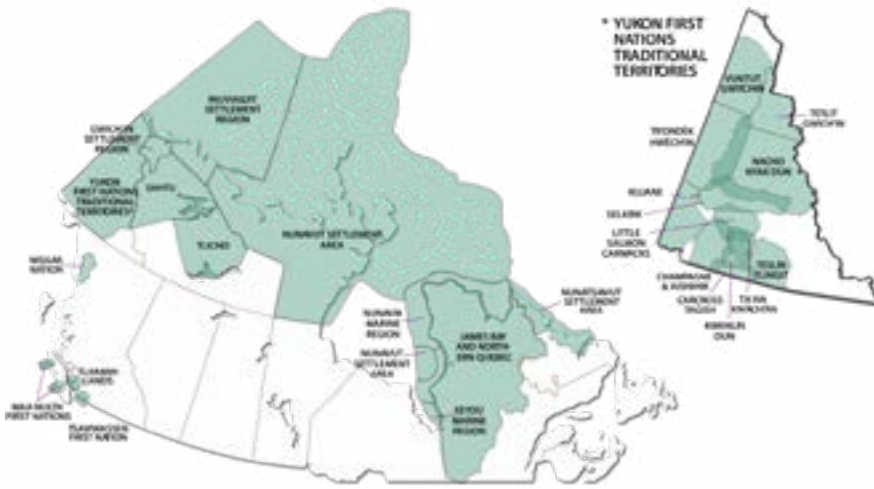
How are treaties significant (or important) to me?



What do I want to know about treaties, the treaty process, leadership, resource and land management, treaty implementation, or other treaty details?

UNDERSTANDING OUR TREATIES

OVERVIEW



Modern treaties are charting new relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canada.

Since 1975, 26 modern treaties have been signed, with Indigenous people reclaiming ownership of more than 600,000 km² of land. And many more modern treaties will be signed in the coming years.

MODERN TREATY TERRITORIES MAP, FROM [LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENTS COALITION](#)

Modern treaties have a major impact on all our lives.



The treaties enable Indigenous peoples to rebuild their communities and nations on their own terms. Modern treaties are intended to improve the social, cultural, political, and economic wellbeing of the Indigenous peoples concerned.

RIANE PETERSON

Citizen of Tetlit Gwich'in First Nation, Northwest Territories
Participant, 2020 National Treaty Simulation

This series is all about inspiring you to learn about modern treaties. Elders, treaty negotiators and those implementing treaties today can also teach you how important modern treaties are for you and the generations to come!



Signing a modern treaty is a TON of work. Negotiations sometimes take decades, and once that's done, they move into implementation. Implementation is the process of figuring out how to make the treaty a reality for the communities.

Implementation is a life long journey, and, as a community member or in leadership, you will be involved in it indirectly or directly.



Many negotiators and Elders who worked hard for years on their treaties are retiring or passing away. Indigenous youth across Canada will be the next leaders of their communities.

If youth do not get involved, the spirit and intent of the hard-fought modern treaties will be lost.

JOHN B. ZOE

Citizen of Tłı̨ch̨ Nation, Northwest Territories
Negotiator, Tłı̨ch̨ Agreement



To help youth understand the modern treaty process, the Gordon Foundation has been hosting Treaty Simulations.

Indigenous youth participate in a hands-on treaty experience, where they get to practice the real thing with experts and Elders who know about the modern treaty process. Over the course of a few days, the youth get to experience what it is like to negotiate and implement a modern treaty.

Together, Indigenous youth can stand up for self-determination and redefine the relationships between their communities and the Canadian government through modern treaties.



After participating in a simulation, these emerging Indigenous leaders are more interested in their modern treaties.

They build skills in negotiation practices and strategies, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, public-speaking and working in teams. It is also an opportunity for Elders and experts to share their knowledge and build intergenerational connections while participants meet other young leaders for ongoing support.

WHAT EMERGING LEADERS AND EXPERTS ARE SAYING ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES AT TREATY SIMULATIONS:

My experience during the entire simulation was so powerful. I learned an incredible amount about the modern treaties process and the negotiations process, what everything is and where it all fits. I was lucky enough to be taught by experts and lucky enough to learn an incredible amount of knowledge from them.

LAURA DRAGON

Citizen of the Gwich'in Nation, Northwest Territories
Participant, 2020 National Treaty Simulation

I love every opportunity I have to sit down with young minds, to share the true history of our people, because sometimes in the public education system or mainstream media it's not accurate.

ED SCHULTZ

Citizen of Little Salmon Carmack First Nation, Yukon
Senior Analyst, Natural Resources and Environment, Council of Yukon First Nations
(Involved in implementing the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement)

It was really great to see the youth get really into it.

GERI-LEE BUYCK

Citizen of the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, Yukon
Participant, 2019 Yukon Regional Treaty Simulation

I thought it was a really wonderful opportunity for me to witness how keen and how interested our young people are, how quickly they learned, and how the natural leaders among them just showed right up – they shone quite brightly.

KIM SMARCH

Citizen of Teslin Tlingit, Yukon
Director of Negotiations and Implementation
Teslin Tlingit Council, Yukon

We lack knowledge. A lot of youth nowadays do not know what a treaty is.

JODY ANN ZOE

Citizen of the Tłjchq Nation, Northwest Territories
Participant, 2020 National Treaty Simulation

Part of the simulation is to [...] get a glimpse into your own strengths and your own

JOHN B ZOE

Citizen of the Tłjchq Nation, Northwest Territories
Negotiator, Tłjchq Agreement

After my first simulation, I was so moved by the experience, my perspective changed. I found myself promising to not retire, but to take my place behind them [the youth], to support and mentor them as they lead the way on the next leg of the journey.

ROBIN BRADASCH

Citizen of Kluane First Nation, Yukon
Negotiator, Kluane First Nation Final Agreement, Yukon
Director of Governance, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs

WHAT ARE TREATIES?

I think the role of the treaties, the modern treaties, in the impact on Canadians generally, maybe are twofold. It certainly helps to raise awareness of issues of reconciliation in the country, the importance of those and how we can strive as a country to overcome past wrongs and provide a footing to find a way to have a respectful and reconciled relationship in an ongoing way with Indigenous governments.

It also provides an avenue for Indigenous governments to, as I mentioned earlier, to participate in the governance of the Federation. And in that way, it impacts Canadians because it will have policy, legislative and other impacts on the way we govern our country.

PAMELA MUIR
Public Service Commissioner, Government of Yukon



Most of us have heard the word “treaty” before, but do we really know what it means?

A treaty is an agreement between two or more nations or states, or international organizations.

A treaty is a mutual agreement between nations. In principle, it's a reciprocal relationship within the Canadian context between the Crown and Indigenous nations. Examples of treaties are the Royal Proclamation, which is often viewed as the prelude to treaty-making here in Canada.

MARLISA BROWN
Citizen of the Gwich'in Nation, Northwest Territories
Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship, 5th Cohort

Treaties include commitments from all the parties who are signing the treaty.



Modern treaties, to me, symbolize a relationship. An agreement between Teslin Tlingit Council, my own self-governing First Nation, and the Government of Yukon and the Government of Canada. Essentially it lays out the obligations and rights of us as First Nation citizens in the Yukon. Ultimately, modern treaties mean to me: First Nations having control of our direction, making our own decisions about our future, our goals, our people, our land.

KIM SMARCH
Citizen of Teslin Tlingit, Yukon
Director of Negotiations and Implementation, Teslin Tlingit Council, Yukon



WHO IS INVOLVED IN TREATIES?

In what is now known as Canada, treaties are agreements between the Crown and Indigenous peoples, but that's not the whole story.

For thousands of years before Canada existed, Indigenous peoples in what is now called Canada made treaties with each other. These agreements established peace and alliances, clarified terms of trade, and defined boundaries between territories.

Treaty-making between European settlers and Indigenous peoples began soon after Europeans arrived in North America and continues to this day.

Early examples of these agreements include the Peace and Friendship treaties of 1725 to 1779 on Canada's East Coast. Numbered treaties were signed between 1871 to 1921.

One of the most recent treaties is the 2016 Tla'amin modern treaty in British Columbia.

TODAY

The Crown (Government of Canada), provincial or territorial government, and Indigenous peoples

BEFORE CONTACT

Indigenous peoples with each other

1725-1779

Peace and Friendship Treaties

1871-1921

Numbered Treaties

HISTORIC AND MODERN TREATIES

Treaties in Canada fall into two basic categories:

- Historic treaties made between 1701 and 1923
- Modern treaties, also known as comprehensive land claims agreements, starting in 1975 to the present day

1701-1923

Historic Treaties

1975-TODAY

Modern Treaties

In the NWT context, we do have historic treaties, which are also known as numbered treaties, and we have Treaty 11 and Treaty 8. Both of the treaties were signed among various Indigenous groups within the territory, many of having their own cultural and traditional practices, values and structures of governance. Within these treaties, what was covered off are vocational hunting and fishing, as well as mining and settlement for settlers and reserves. Some of these treaty obligations were unfulfilled. Now, what we see today, are modern treaties. Examples of modern treaties are land claim agreements and self-government agreements.

MARLISA BROWN

Citizen of the Gwich'in Nation, Northwest Territories
Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship, 5th Cohort

Modern treaties mean that the old treaties that we had were the original treaties, the numbered treaties that our forefathers had set down with the government to move forward on things like development, and to basically lay down the first agreement on land and resources. And not very in-depth, but amazingly enough, there's something historical that we can't ignore in there, and that's the connection that the people had to the land, the water, the resources, and the relationship they have with each other. Modern treaties have given us a second opportunity through the land claims. The modern treaties are essentially the land claims that we have signed on to.

ETHEL BLONDIN ANDREW

Beneficiary of the Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement

Former Chair, Sahtu Secretariat Inc.

(Involved in implementing the Sahtu Dene and Métis Land Claim Settlement Act)

Generally, Canada recognizes rights to land and land-based rights, like harvesting, as Aboriginal rights, and they recognize self-government, governance jurisdictions, as Aboriginal rights, but there's no clear definition of exactly what that means or how it plays out for any specific Indigenous nation.

So, the purpose of modern treaties, one purpose of them is to clearly define some or all of those Aboriginal rights that are guaranteed and recognized in Canada's Constitution. So, something like a land claim agreement will instead of at a high level, just saying you have Aboriginal rights, it will spell out in a 200- or 300-page document what those rights are to land and things relating to land. So, the land claim agreement as a modern treaty will replace that broad statement of rights with a very specific definition of what those rights are. And there's kind of a double-edged sword there, because although you get a very clear definition of what your rights are, there's also going to be explicit or implicit, sometimes both, statements about what rights you don't have.

DANIEL T'SELEIE

Negotiator, K'ahsho Got'ine Self-Government Negotiations,
Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories

No treaty can return to Indigenous peoples all they have lost since European settlers arrived, and work to redefine their relationships with Canada continues.

Right now, there appears to be a gap between the legal status of modern treaties and how they are implemented by Canada. For example, modern treaties are called "Nation to Nation" agreements, but are they actually treated that way? Some modern treaty holders point out that Canada does not regard modern treaty relationships the same way they do international treaties between sovereign nations.



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE TREATIES?

THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN PERSONAL DEFINITION OF TREATIES AS YOU LEARN ABOUT THEIR IMPACT ON ALL OUR LIVES IN THE NEXT EPISODE OF THIS SERIES.

In terms of Aboriginal rights, things are changing as courts come up with new interpretations, and within our federal government, we see the legislation of United Nations' Declaration of Indigenous People's Rights. What implications are these things going to have on our modern treaties? These are things we really need to be thinking of, and be actively involved in, because our agreements could change for better or for worse. As youth, we are the future, and we need to be involved in those decision-making processes.

MARLISA BROWN

Citizen of the Gwich'in Nation, Northwest Territories
Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship, 5th Cohort

UNDERSTANDING OUR TREATIES

TREATIES AND YOUR LIFE

Let's talk about *your* treaty.

In your community, the things you can see, like the school, the hospital, clinic or nursing station, the bylaw officers – these services are all connected to and affected by your treaty. There are also things we can't see, like the laws in place to protect your land, water and maybe even the natural resources around your community.



I understand that impact to be one of responsibility to pick-up that vision that was put forward by my ancestors and my Elders and past leaders.

KRIS STATNYK

Citizen of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Yukon
Lawyer and Advisor

These treaties are about taking back control of our destinies, making our own decisions and determining our own fate.

ROBIN BRADASCH

Citizen of Kluane First Nation, Yukon
Negotiator, Kluane First Nation Final Agreement, Yukon
Director of Governance,
Crown-Indigenous Relations
and Northern Affairs

Maybe that new road in town is there because of your treaty. Your treaty might have even created new jobs in town and other projects related to business and trade.

Your treaty helped connect your community's rights to your lands. It provides you with rules for harvesting fish and wildlife on your land and rules for what non-citizens can and cannot do on your land.

You also had the ability to have law making power over your lands and your resources and the delivery of programs and services equivalent to the federal crown.

ED SCHULTZ

Citizen of Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Yukon
Senior Analyst, Natural Resources and Environment,
Council of Yukon First Nations

(Involved in implementing the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement)

It guarantees you those rights and it gives you that security to know that you can go out there and hunt, you can go out there and trap.

DANIEL T'SELEIE

Negotiator, K'ahsho Got'ine Self-Government
Negotiations, Fort Good Hope, Northwest
Territories

Modern treaties exist to better the social, cultural, political, and economic life of Indigenous people, and that includes you!

They override, or cancel, outdated rulings like the Indian Act, putting the power back into the hands of Indigenous communities, so you can make your own decisions about your future.

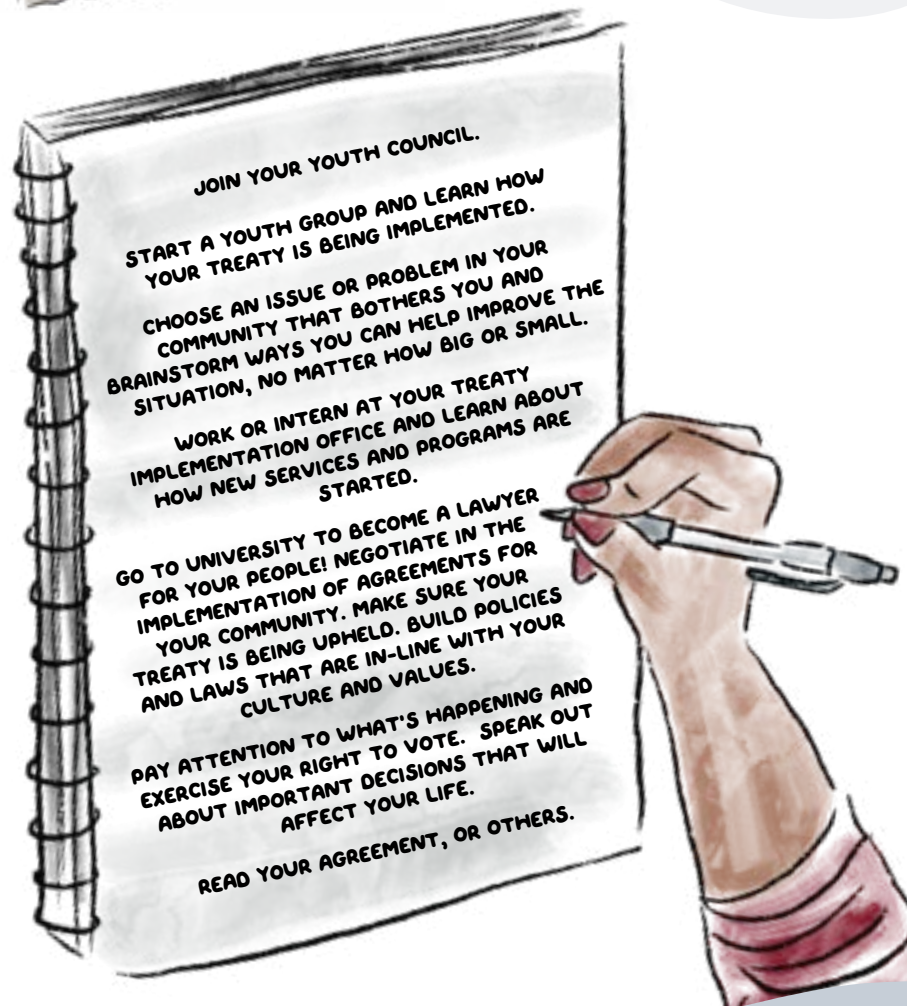


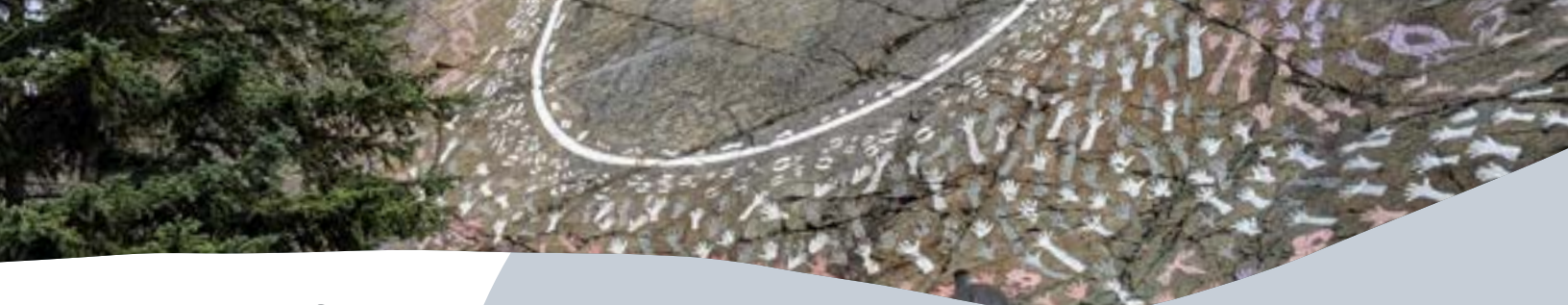
Getting involved in your community's modern treaty is an opportunity to become a leader and learn important skills to help your community move forward into the future.

As youth, there are many different ways you can get involved in the implementation of modern treaties.

KRIS STATNYK

Citizen of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Yukon
Lawyer and Advisor





**HERE ARE SOME
SUGGESTIONS
FROM THE
EXPERTS AND
YOUTH JUST
LIKE YOU...**

Get curious, go to meetings, ask questions, offer to help.

ROBIN BRADASCH

Citizen of Kluane First Nation, Yukon
Negotiator, Kluane First Nation Final Agreement, Yukon
Director of Governance, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs

Explore your languages, explore your history.

JOHN B. ZOE

Citizen of Tłı̄chǫ Nation, Northwest Territories
Negotiator, Tłı̄chǫ Agreement

Modern treaty holders and self-governing First Nations have youth councils.

KIM SMARCH

Citizen of Teslin Tlingit, Yukon
Director of Negotiations and Implementation,
Teslin Tlingit Council, Yukon

Start thinking about what opportunities are there for you and young people in your age group in five or ten or fifteen years.

DANIEL T'SELEIE

Negotiator, K'ahsho Got'ine Self-Government Negotiations,
Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories

Most importantly, I think they should talk to their parents, their grandparents, and see what they could acquire in terms of information about the specific treaties that apply in their territories.

DAVE JOE

Citizen of Champagne Aishihik First Nations, Yukon
Negotiator, Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement

Doing practices, maintaining practices that maintain your connection to your territory, your lands and your relatives.

KRIS STATNYK

Citizen of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Yukon
Lawyer and Advisor

Get involved. Start small, take baby steps if you have to. Start going to public community meetings if your community has some.

JODY ANN ZOE

Citizen of the Tłı̄chǫ Nation, Northwest Territories
Participant, 2020 National Treaty Simulation

**WE ARE THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS
AND WE NEED TO LEARN AND TO BE TAUGHT
IN ORDER TO PRESERVE WHAT THE LEADERS
BEFORE US HAVE FOUGHT SO HARD TO SECURE.**

LAURA DRAGON

Citizen of the Gwich'in Nation, Northwest Territories
Participant, 2020 National Treaty Simulation