



Northern Lights, Fairbanks, Alaska © Dominique Braud/TNC Photo Contest

Indigenous Right Relations

Strategy and Action Plan
Summary



INDIGENOUS RIGHT RELATIONS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Nature United is a conservation organization focused on supporting Indigenous-led conservation and advancing Natural Climate Solutions. We work in partnership to support the authority of Indigenous Peoples to manage and steward their lands and resources. Nature United has a long-standing commitment to being a respectful partner and working in right relations with Indigenous Peoples. Working in right relations means conducting ourselves and our work in a good way, being receptive, collaborative, and responsive. We believe that to fulfill our commitments to working in right relations we must:

- Create space to listen
- Reflect on our actions and choices
- Be comfortable with discomfort
- Take responsibility
- Try new ways of doing things
- Share what we are learning

Over the last decade, Nature United has continuously adapted our strategies, approaches, and operational practices to align our work with our commitment to being a respectful partner and working in right relations with Indigenous Peoples.

In 2021, we worked with Reciprocal Consulting to assess of our organization to better understand how we were living up to our commitments to working in right relations and being a respectful partner. The resulting report included reflections and recommendations on how Nature United could address inconsistencies and strengthen our existing efforts¹. Our team and Board reviewed and workshopped the report's recommendations to develop Nature United's Indigenous Right Relations Strategy and Action Plan.

This plan, built on five strategic commitments, will carry us through to 2025, when we comprehensively revisit our organizational strategic plan.

Nature United's Right Relations Strategic Commitments



Invest in, plan for, and prioritize right relations work



Consistently learn, reflect and share



Listen to and elevate Indigenous voices and perspectives



Advance reconciliation and work with reciprocity



Ensure operations align with right relations commitments

Photos left to right: A grizzly bear in Khutzeymateen Sanctuary in British Columbia, Canada ©Jon McCormack; A humpback whale dives in the channel in front of the Spirit Bear Lodge, Klemtu, British Columbia, Canada © Jason Houston; The Watchman Totem Pole guards the Big House and watches over the village of Klemtu from in front of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Big House in Klemtu, British Columbia © Jason Houston; Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation, Northwest Territories © Pat Kane; An aerial view of the Holmes River, British Columbia © Shane Kalyn/TNC Photo Contest

¹ Reciprocal Consulting. Nature United Indigenous Right Relations Audit. August 2021.

Our Journey To Date



Nature United's Right Relations Strategic Commitments

Nature United's Indigenous Right Relations Strategy and Action Plan are under five strategic commitments. For each commitment, the Nature United team has identified activities that can advance our commitment to working in right relations. The plan also describes work that has happened or is ongoing at Nature United, demonstrating that our commitments are in progress, iterative, and continuously evolving.

Please contact us to view the full Indigenous Right Relations Strategy and Action Plan for a detailed look at each commitment and work to date.



Commitment 1: Invest in, plan for, and prioritize right relations work.

Working in right relations requires dedicated time and resources. With the scheduled time, budgets, and reporting, dedicated capacity will allow staff to work individually, within and across Nature United teams, and with networks and partners to integrate and advance this work.

Key Actions

- Endorse and monitor the implementation of the Indigenous Right Relations Strategy and Action Plan at the Board of Directors level.
- Recruit a Director of People, Culture & Diversity to drive the right relations work forward.
- Allocate time for staff to implement actions and participate in learning.
- Allocate the budget for the new capacity, systems, training, etc.
- Integrate Indigenous Right Relations Strategy and Action Plan with all strategic, annual planning, and work plan processes.



Commitment 2: Consistently learn, reflect, and share.

Working in right relations is a continuous process or journey rather than a definitive destination. This journey requires a strong and active commitment to learning, reflecting, and sharing new insights to continue to grow our understanding and practice of how to be in right relations with Indigenous Peoples. The Indigenous Right Relations Strategy and Action Plan will act as a living document and be regularly reviewed and updated to map out the next steps and priorities and to reflect ongoing learning.

Key Actions

- Establish and implement new structures and processes to debrief and share learnings within and across teams at Nature United related to strengthening our approach to working in right relations.
- Continue to engage with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) world office and business units around best practices related to working with Indigenous partners.
- Develop and implement an organizational Learning Plan that includes cultural safety training and other opportunities for the Board and staff to learn, reflect, and integrate information and build skills needed for their area of work related to Indigenous issues and working in right relations.



Commitment 3: Listen to and elevate Indigenous voices and perspectives.

Nature United is committed to supporting and advancing Indigenous-led conservation initiatives and ensuring our work respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples. This requires listening deeply to Indigenous Peoples and partners and amplifying those voices and perspectives.

Key Actions

- Increase Indigenous staff representation through recruitment and retention strategies.
- Raise the visibility of Indigenous-led conservation initiatives and support Indigenous partners with their communications needs.
- Work with more Indigenous organizations, advisors, consultants, scientists, etc., to improve our strategic, programmatic, communications, and philanthropy work.
- Build an understanding of how Indigenous Knowledge does and can play a role and be a part of conservation initiatives.



Commitment 4: Advance reconciliation and work with reciprocity.

Nature United strives to support and advance an Indigenous-led approach to conservation. However, historically the conservation movement has not considered the impacts of conservation strategies on Indigenous Peoples and communities. Nature United acknowledges this truth and works to champion better practices and seek reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples where harm has been done. Being in right relations also means fostering a reciprocal relationship and delivering benefits to partners by sharing knowledge, talent, or needed support whenever possible. It also means recognizing and receiving the knowledge, leadership, and support offered by partners.

Key Actions

- When recruiting new staff and Board members, ensure the candidate's commitment to Nature United's approach to working in right relations.
- Identify what reconciliation and reciprocity mean in the context of Nature United's work and what role the organization, teams, and individuals can play in advancing this work.
- Ensure that Nature United's Crown government relations work upholds commitments to respect and advance Indigenous rights in conservation policy work and elevates Indigenous voices.



Commitment 5: Ensure operations align with right relations commitments.

It is important that Nature United's operations, policies, procedures, and practices are in alignment with our commitment to respectful partnerships and working in right relations.

Key Actions

- Identify how operations/legal can better support Conservation and Philanthropy Team's needs with respect to working in right relations.
- Continue to review and amend policies, procedures, or practices (SOPs) to ensure their alignment with right relations objectives, community needs, and cultural protocols.
- Continue to support and facilitate donor learning about Indigenous Peoples and Nature United's approach to working in right relations.
- Continue to develop principles and a framework to guide government, and corporate relations work related to right relations and seek out expert advisors to review.
- Continue to strengthen communications guidelines, language, and style guides to reflect right relations objectives.

Ongoing Reflections

As we continue our path to working in right relations with Indigenous Peoples and being a respectful partner, we will continue to ask honest questions about how to continue to undertake this work meaningfully. Some of the big ideas that Nature United must continue to address actively include:

- How do we ensure right relations work is incorporated into all parts of our organization and not silo-ed?
- How do we integrate Indigenous perspectives and approaches and not default to Western or colonial ones?
- How do we ensure that we are a good ally and not simply performing at being an ally?
- How do we shift power to Indigenous leadership in our partnerships and not hold that power for ourselves?
- How do we ensure Indigenous partners are elevated and centred, and not tokenized?
- How do we ensure that our words and actions are respectful, traumainformed, and not perpetuating harm?

Please contact us to learn more about Nature United's Indigenous Right Relations Strategy and Action Plan.

www.natureunited.ca