

A land acknowledgment is an important path and a first step to dismantling racial and colonized oppression within our spaces. Indigenous Nations have always formally welcomed and acknowledged land territories when hosting visitors and when traveling to neighboring communities. The land is not just merely space that bodies occupy; it is a depository of culture, story, history, and tradition, and it is with these traditions in mind that we reflect and center ourselves and our thoughts toward respect.

Please join us as we acknowledge and honor that the word Ohio comes from the Iroquoian word *ohi-yo'*, for 'good rivers' and was a place of gathering and ceremony, trade and exchange, food growing, sharing and story, and respect for culture. The Iroquoian, Siouxian, and the Algonquin speaking peoples are still here. We can never separate the people from the land- for this land longs for its people. We acknowledge the homeland of the Shawnee, Delaware, Potawatomi, Miami, Wyandot, Seneca, Chippewa, Ottawa and the Wapaghkonnetta (*waa puh kuh net uh*). Over 39 historic Nations and bands call this land home. Today we are gathered on the land that was unceded and stolen. I ask you to acknowledge these communities, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations.

❖ We are committed to the process of working to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism.

❖ We acknowledge that this place was founded upon exclusions and erasures of Indigenous knowledge about how to care for these lands.

❖ We are obligated to support and educate each other with accurate information about the true history of this land.

Decolonization means that we will strive to be in service of the water and the rivers and the animals in relational solidarity with them. And as people now on this land we must do what we can to provide nature and wildness with protection and defense.

This land acknowledgment was authored by **Shane Creepingbear (Kiowa)** in collaboration with **Chief Ben Barnes** of the ***Shawnee Tribe-based in Miami, Oklahoma***, whose people were forcibly removed from Ohio areas around Wapakoneta in 1831. Other contributors include **Dawn Knickerbocker (Anishinaabe)**, **Jheri Neri (Dine)** and support from the **Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition (GCNAC)**.