
Smiths Falls Public Library



Policy Type: **Foundational**

Policy Number: **FN-05**

Policy Title: **Respect and
Acknowledgement
Declaration**

Policy Approval Date:
May 28, 2024

Last Review Date:

The Smiths Falls Public Library understands the need to recognize and embrace the principles of Truth and Reconciliation with Ontario's Indigenous population, as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.

Section 1: Declaration

With this understanding, the Smiths Public Library acknowledges the First Peoples on whose traditional territories we live and work. We believe that acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Indigenous Peoples, both in the past and the present. We believe that territorial acknowledgements are not simply a *pro forma* statement made before a meeting but a vital *part* of our work. We believe that recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations and are key to reconciliation.

The Smiths Public Library will use will use the Town of Smiths Falls Land Acknowledgement Statement, either in whole or part. This statement is as follows:

“On [current date], we acknowledge that this sacred land on which Smiths Falls is now located has been a site of human activity for over 10,000 years and is rich in Indigenous history. This land is the ancestral and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation. We are grateful to the Algonquin ancestors who cared for the land and water in order that we might meet here today. We are also grateful to the Algonquin People for their contribution in the making of the Rideau Canal which runs thru Smiths Falls.

Before settlers arrived, this territory was subject to the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Nations to peaceably share and care for resources. After settlers arrived, it became subject to the Three Figure Wampum Belt, last carried by Algonquin Elder William Commanda, which commemorates the sharing of this land with English, French and Indigenous Nations under the governance of Natural Law. We

recognize with gratitude the knowledge Smiths Falls and contributions that the Algonquin Peoples bring to the Municipality of Smiths Falls. Today, Smiths Falls is also home to other Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We extend our respect to all First Nations, Inuit and Métis people for their valuable past and present contributions.

We are mindful of broken covenants and the need to reconcile with all our relations. Together, may we care for this land and each other, drawing on the strength of our mutual history of nation building through peace and friendship being mindful of generations to come.”

Section 2: Collection

The Smiths Falls Public Library will provide collections relating to Indigenous cultures, languages, peoples, and issues in a variety of physical and electronic formats. Our collection will include titles about First Nation communities. We will prioritize the inclusion of works by Indigenous authors in our collection.

Section 3: Services

The Smiths Falls Public Library will provide welcoming spaces and library services to Indigenous peoples and will take advantage of opportunities to share elements of Indigenous cultures with non-Indigenous persons.