

# Revealing an Indigenous Place

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## **Why revealing the Indigenous significance of the Toronto Islands is important:**

Mnisiing, the original name for the islands, is a significant place for the First Peoples of this territory and used by Indigenous peoples long before written history. Through our continued learning, and sharing by elders and traditional knowledge holders, we have heard that since time immemorial, the islands, its sandy shoals, and the sand spits that preceded them were a sacred place where mothers travelled to birth their children, where ceremonies were conducted, where Anishinaabeg harvested staples such as whitefish and wild rice and were places where Indigenous traders to colonial York sought rest and refuge.

## **Issues to be addressed:**

Indigenous history, identity, and living culture are not present on the Island and need to be made more visible so that all visitors know they are visiting an Indigenous place.

## **What we have heard:**

Through extensive and thoughtful Indigenous engagement we have heard that Indigenous practices and values should be considered and have a place in how the island is managed today and into the future—known as the practice of "Placekeeping". We have heard that the living culture and diversity of its treaty and territorial rights-holders, and Toronto's urban Indigenous communities should be shared and celebrated on this land. We heard suggestions to create space for ceremony, healing, and cultural uses, to support economic opportunities, and to create space for arts and cultural programming. Above all, we heard that ideas to reveal an Indigenous place must be respectful, led by Indigenous people, and not tokenize people or culture. The Island should also be a place of learning

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and celebrating Canada's First Peoples, where all visitors to the Island are keenly aware that they are visiting an Indigenous place.

### **Ideas + Actions being considered:**

The following ideas are based on input and vision from First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities, whose vision and ideas need to be grounded in their culture and worldview. We share them with you today and invite participants to share comments that will be taken back to the elders, knowledge holders and the Indigenous communities for their consideration.

#### 1. Identifying dedicated space for ceremony

- A. Designate Snake Island as a formal ceremonial space, providing infrastructure and support for programs and uses

#### 2. Identifying opportunities for naming and re-naming

- Consider opportunities to rename places of Indigenous significance
- Identify meaningful ways to incorporate Indigenous language into wayfinding, place names, and interpretation across the islands

#### 3. Enhancing landings and gateways

- A. Integrate art and cultural markers to signal arrival on Indigenous land
- Identify opportunities to share protocols for respecting the land and water through interpretation and programming

#### 4. Integrating Storytelling and Interpretation throughout the park

- A. Create a Cultural Narrative Trail to provide a linked interpretive experience across the Island
- Provide diverse settings for sharing Indigenous teaching moments

#### 5. Identifying spaces for teaching, learning, and sharing Indigenous knowledge

- A. Create nodes along the Cultural Narrative Trail to share teachings and celebrate diverse Indigenous communities (e.g. 13 Grandmother Moons)
- B. Create a major gathering and celebration space in a key destination that includes winter access to provide opportunities for year-round interpretation and teaching (e.g. Big Spirit Moon Plaza)
- C. Create a flexible gathering and celebration space to support Indigenous and non-Indigenous programming in an open-air setting (Olympic Island Event Space)
- Create teaching spaces across the Island to demonstrate Indigenous knowledge and land management practices

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## 6. Identifying opportunities and spaces to support Indigenous artists, craftspeople, food vendors, and broader businesses

- A. Provide dedicated space within Centre Landing Marketplace to accommodate frequent and occasional selling of food, crafts, and wares
  - Simplify access to a variety of spaces and opportunities to attract and retain diverse Indigenous-operated businesses on the Island

## 7. Exploring opportunities for co-management

- Explore opportunities to operate tourism and transportation services for the Island
- Identify and promote opportunities to integrate art and cultural markers
- Explore opportunities to deliver programs for Indigenous and non-Indigenous visitors and operate permanent or pop-up businesses on the Island
- Identify opportunities to manage and restore natural environments of the Island







MAP ENV-01: Supporting a Dynamic Environment - Protection

IDEAS & ACTIONS:

- 1. Identifying dedicated space for ceremony
  - A. Designate Snake Island as a ceremonial space
- 3. Enhancing landings and gateways
  - A. Provide spaces for art and cultural markers to signal arrival on Indigenous land

- 5. Identifying spaces for teaching, learning, and sharing Indigenous knowledge
  - A. Create nodes along the Cultural Narrative Trail
  - B. Create a major gathering and celebration space in a key destination that includes winter access
  - C. Create a flexible gathering space to support Indigenous and non-Indigenous programming

- 6. Identifying opportunities and spaces to support Indigenous artists, craftspeople, food vendors, and broader businesses
  - A. Provide dedicated space within Centre Landing Marketplace to accommodate frequent and occasional selling of food, crafts, and wares