What is a Land Acknowledgement?
A land or territorial acknowledgement is a statement made that recognizes the ancestral place of Indigenous peoples who historically occupied the current institution or space. Land acknowledgements may be made at the beginning of panels, presentations, talks, or websites and are a common practice in Australia and Canada.

Why is a land acknowledgement important?
Historical genocide, oppression, and erasure have plagued Indigenous peoples in the United States and elsewhere, and the effects of colonialism are still felt today. Land acknowledgements are important because they recognize the traditional and current relationships that Indigenous peoples have had with the land, offer respect for the Indigenous people who lived on the land, and are an opportunity for the speaker to broaden public awareness of indigenous history.

How do I make a land acknowledgement?
A land acknowledgement should come from a genuine respect and motivation to educate yourself on the history of the Indigenous people in your area. Given that most geoscientists may be presenting from a place different than where you might be doing your research you can determine whether you want to acknowledge the Indigenous groups from both or one of the physical places. Requesting from the local Indigenous community how they would like to be acknowledged is ideal in order to open up a dialogue however this might not always be an option.

You may begin by doing some research on which Indigenous tribes lived in your area. Some Indigenous groups are still present near their homeland however many have been relocated far from where they consider their ancestral homeland and so research may become complicated. Out of respect it’s important that you know how to pronounce the names of tribes appropriately. Below are three examples of acknowledgements.

Examples
McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee (hoh-DEE-noh-SHoh-nee) and Anishinabeg (Ah-nish-ih-nah'-bey) nations. McGill honours, recognizes and respects these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

“I respectfully acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the ______ people.”

“I want to respectfully acknowledge the ______ People, who have historically stewarded this land."

Further Resources
Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement
Native Governance Center Land Acknowledgement
Guide to Indigenous Land and Territorial Acknowledgements for Cultural Institutions