

**INDIGENOUS LAND TRUST RESEARCH COORDINATOR**  
**Call for Applications – Due September 10, 2021**

**Position Summary:**

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and University of Guelph are seeking a researcher to help support work emerging from the Indigenous land trust working group of the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership. The project will explore the concept of Indigenous land trusts, with a focus on: i) identifying and examining the conditions under which the Indigenous land trust model can support Indigenous-led conservation efforts, and ii) identifying ways in which to change the land trust model so that conservation on private lands is more compatible with Indigenous worldviews, governance, and values.

The project will be developed within the context of:

- 1) the [Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership](#) (CRP), which is an Indigenous-led initiative coordinated through the University of Guelph, involving more than 30 Indigenous and non-Indigenous community and research collaborators from across Canada (including NCC), to ensure Indigenous laws and knowledge systems play a significant part in helping Canada meet its international obligations for the increased protection of biodiversity; and,
- 2) [NCC's](#) commitment to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous People in Canada. NCC is currently working to better engage with Indigenous People in places it works as well as better support Indigenous-led efforts to conserve and steward traditional territories. This includes examining ways in which the land trust model can be decolonized to become a better, more respectful approach that could better suit Indigenous conservation objectives.

The successful candidate will work with members of the CRP and NCC to undertake research related to the overall concept (see attached questions), including through literature reviews, critical analyses, and interviews. The successful candidate will have an opportunity not only to undertake research but also coordinate research with other researchers and students during the course of this project.

As well as having opportunities to contribute to the University of Guelph and wider academic community, there will be opportunities to contribute to CRP's and NCC's ongoing conservation efforts. For example, the successful candidate will be able to lead and participate in webinars, participate in committees and similar bodies, provide guidance on policy and related conservation management tools, and contribute to national discussions on the intersection of Indigenous rights and responsibilities and conservation on private (fee simple) lands.

The successful candidate may also have opportunities to mentor Indigenous youth or other community members from Indigenous communities to help build the capacity of future Indigenous conservation leaders.

**Position objectives:**

1. Provide information on the land trust model that can support Indigenous nations in their decision-making vis-à-vis appropriate conservation mechanisms for their lands.
2. Develop recommendations and pathways for the development of decolonial models of conservation to support Indigenous led conservation on fee simple lands.

**Qualifications:**

*We realize that knowledge, skills and experience can be gained through academic, community, and other cultural pathways.*

- Masters or PhD graduate in relevant field that touches on the intersection between Indigenous rights and conservation (e.g., a social or biological science focused on social-ecological systems, Indigenous studies, conservation science).
- Demonstrated ability to conduct community-based research.
- Experience working with Indigenous communities in Canada.
- Understanding and appreciation for reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through the application of culturally-appropriate research methodologies.
- Familiarity with non-governmental conservation organizations such as Indigenous and other land trusts.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills for diverse audiences.
- Strong interpersonal skills in cross-cultural environments.
- Strong project coordination and management skills.

***If you are an Indigenous researcher and interested in this opportunity but feel you may not meet the qualifications, we would love to hear from you! Please contact us to discuss further.***

*The University of Guelph, CRP and NCC value diverse traditions, heritage, knowledge and experiences in our missions and in our workplaces. We celebrate the full participation of people from all walks of life as we work towards common goals. We strive for a conservation movement in which equity, diversity and inclusion are the norm. This is our continuous commitment: to promote healthy people, healthy communities and a healthy planet for everyone.*

**Length of Position:**

4 – 8 months (funding contingent)

**Location:**

Candidates can be based anywhere in Canada and work remotely. Candidates may need to travel occasionally for meetings or other important occasions.

**To apply:**

Please send a cover letter, full CV (including contact information for 2 references), and one relevant examples of your written work to Sabine Pelletier with the Nature Conservancy of Canada ([Sabine.Pelletier@natureconservancy.ca](mailto:Sabine.Pelletier@natureconservancy.ca)) with the subject ***Indigenous Land Trust Coordinator***. Deadline for applications is September 10, 2021.

**About The Nature Conservancy of Canada:**

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is Canada's leading national land conservation organization. A private, non-profit organization, we partner with individuals, corporations, foundations, Indigenous communities and other non-profit organizations and governments at all levels to protect our most important natural treasures — the natural areas that sustain Canada's plants and wildlife. We secure properties (through donation, purchase, conservation agreement and the relinquishment of other legal interests in land) and manage them for the long term. Since 1962, NCC and its partners have helped to protect 14 million hectares, coast to coast to coast. NCC is committed to building meaningful relationships with Indigenous People in Canada and is working to improve its ability to engage with Indigenous People and support Indigenous-led conservation efforts to conserve and steward their traditional territories.

**About the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership and University of Guelph:**

The Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP) represents a seven-year program of work hosted by the University of Guelph that weaves together a breadth of partners including Indigenous thought leaders, organizations, youth and Elders; emerging and established scholars; prominent conservation agencies and organizations; Indigenous communities and nations; and knowledge mobilization specialists. Our collaboration seeks to be a model for cross-cultural, decolonizing partnerships that leverage collective wisdom by embracing multiple worldviews, knowledge systems, and protocols for working together. We support the establishment of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) and the transformation of existing protected areas to be better aligned with Indigenous knowledge systems and law. Biocultural Indicators and Outcomes is one of the four research themes in the project. Its goal is to conduct the research necessary to develop appropriate conservation planning mechanisms that align with Indigenous and Crown law, reflect Indigenous priorities and employ both Western science and Indigenous knowledge systems.

## Potential Research Questions about Indigenous Land Trusts

### General questions:

- How do you Indigenize the current model of land trusts?
- How do you run a good land trust?
- What are the specifics relevant to Indigenous lands?

### Specific questions

### Objectives

A) Provide information to Indigenous nations to help in their decision-making vis-à-vis appropriate conservation mechanisms for their lands and,

B) Help guide the development of a decolonial model of conservation to support Indigenous led conservation on fee simple lands.

### Main Questions

Under what conditions could the development of an Indigenous Land Trust be helpful to Indigenous peoples?

What are the characteristics of the land trust model that would need to change so that conservation on fee simple lands are more compatible with Indigenous conservation?

### Specific Questions:

#### Land Trust Fundamentals

- How are land trusts created, what are the basic considerations in doing so, and how does this differ across Canada? What additional considerations need to be taken into account for Indigenous land trusts?
- What are some of the initial and ongoing costs associated with establishing and maintaining a land trust? Are there different considerations for establishing a land trust on reserve or off reserve? Are there tax exemptions or other considerations relevant for Indigenous organizations?
- What are the benefits and constraints for Indigenous communities and Nations of major federal programs (eg ecological gifts)?
- What are the viable funding models for Indigenous land trusts?

#### Governance

- What are the potential benefits, risks and drawbacks for using the land trust model for Indigenous communities? (e.g. in regards to self-determination, advancing rights and responsibilities)
- What innovative solutions already exist or are under development to address the risks or drawbacks?
- What are the ways in which land trusts can be transformed to better align with Indigenous governance, law, knowledge systems and relations to land? What are the leverage points in establishing and maintaining a land trust at which the process can be changed or adapted to better reflect Indigenous traditions and laws and engage

- Indigenous community members in its structure (e.g. board of directors, staffing, decision-making processes, funding, legislative definitions)?
- What are the pros/cons of an Indigenous Land Trust compared to other methods available to Indigenous people to protect their lands outside of the reserve system?

#### Domestic law and policy

- Can reserve land and can fee simple land held by an Indigenous land trust eventually be transferred to reserve land? What would be the benefit of doing so? And what are the tax or title implications? Are there benefits for having parallel legal structures that are functionally managed as a unit?
- Does holding fee simple land in an Indigenous land trusts have any implications for negotiations, or can land held by a land trust be used as part of future settlements (such as treaties or other constructive agreements)? Does doing so put Indigenous Nations in a worse or better position for negotiations? *Some of this is already answered but perhaps not well known.*
- Does provincial or territorial conservation easement legislation or charitable laws enable Indigenous land trusts? Does the easement legislation support purposes that might be relevant to an Indigenous land trust other than for the purposes of conservation?