

UNC Charlotte Land Acknowledgement

Today, this acknowledgement is being read from the foothills of the Appalachian mountains on Catawba territory, although we encourage you, wherever you are, to remember and recognize the Native peoples on whose lands on which you are located today.

The University of North Carolina, Charlotte is located on the traditional territories of the Catawba, Waxhaw, Cheraw, and Sugeree peoples, and, as many of us are settlers, migrants, or descendants of those forcefully brought to this land, we are here because this land is colonized.

The city of Charlotte itself is located on the traditional crossroads of two Indigenous trading paths, the Occaneechi Path and the Lower Cherokee Traders' Path, two routes that facilitated the extensive trade networks of Cherokee, Catawba, Saponi, and Congaree peoples prior to colonization. Many descendants of Cheraw, Waxhaw, and Sugeree communities eventually joined the Catawba peoples, and today, the [Catawba Nation](#) continues to thrive as a federally recognized tribe located less than one hour south of the university. Contemporary efforts of the Catawba Nation include low-income and emergency housing programs, educational and cultural programming, a senior center, water and land management, air quality monitoring, organic farming extension services, and a media services company called Red Heritage Media. Additionally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, [Catawba Indian Health Service](#) continues to offer clinical, telemedical, pharmaceutical, and food services to members of the Catawba Indian Nation and other federally recognized American Indians and Alaska Natives.

We would also like to recognize today the many enslaved and indentured peoples who were forced to dedicate their labor to the

construction of what is now Mecklenburg County. To these peoples and their descendants, we acknowledge the grave injustices inflicted on them, and we recognize the indelible mark of their labor on the creation of the spaces in which we gather today.

Lastly, in recognizing that we are on colonized Indigenous land that has also been crafted through forced labor, we take it as our collective responsibility to critically interrogate the histories, present-day patterns of settler colonization and oppression, and the many Indigenous forms of resurgence in this place. For example, for more information on the Catawba Nation, visit CatawbaIndian.net or check out the [Catawba Cultural Preservation Project](#), that formed in 1989 to, in their words, “preserve, protect, promote and maintain the rich culture and heritage of the Catawba Indian Nation.” For interviews, letters, and other information about the Catawba Nation and the Sumter Tribe of Cheraw/Creek Indians, check out the digital archives at NativeSouthCarolina.org, or check out Cheraw authors, Christopher Hodalee Scott Sewell and S. Pony Hill’s 2011 book on the extended networks of Cheraw peoples across the southeast titled [*The Indians of North Florida: From Carolina to Florida, the Story of the Survival of a Distinct American Indian Community*](#).

Thank you for being with us today—we hope you’ll accept this invitation to honor, protect, and sustain this land and all of Turtle Island through shared knowledge and support for the Catawba, Cheraw, and many other Indigenous communities who continue to thrive here today.