



Colonization and Climate Change Teacher Backgrounder

- When settlers first arrived on Turtle Island the Indigenous communities who had been residing on this land-base since time immemorial (the beginning of time) enjoyed a relationship characterized by *belonging* with the land.
- Indigenous groups felt that they were not separate from the natural world but instead were embedded within in it. The earth was their mother and all biotic and abiotic entities, imbued with a spirit from the creator, were their relatives.
- In this manner land could not be owned by any one person. Instead, all individuals were in relationship with the land and had responsibilities to live in reciprocity with the natural world.
- These responsibilities were communicated from the Creator through the Original Instructions.
- In order to justify taking land from Indigenous communities, settlers constructed land as an 'it' or as a commodity that could be separated from its inhabitants in order to be bought and sold.
- The relationship settlers created with the land is one characterized by *owning*.
- This relationship to land was convenient as when land was seen as a commodity or as an "it" it is much easier to extract resources from it in often violent and destructive ways.
- In this manner colonialism undermined the *belonging* relationship that Indigenous peoples had with the land as well the health, resiliency, and sustainability of the natural world.
- This relationship with the land characterized by *owning* remains.