

# GIS and Information Management Needs within First Nations in Canada

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## Abstract

*Six Nations of the Grand River Community is the largest populated First Nation in Canada. It is situated in the centre of the most populated and industrialized area of Canada in Southern Ontario. With the development of the Land Claims Policy in the 1970's, Six Nations became involved in research into the lands as deeded by the Haldimand Deed of October 25, 1784. Six Nations had since collected thousand of historical documents that needed to be managed and visually displayed on a map. A search for a GIS began. However, in searching for a GIS, it became apparent that no one system could our specific needs or the needs of many other First Nations in Canada. Therefore, from an information management need, a Native GIS system was developed by Six Nations. This system has since been designed for Native specific applications such as historical and present legal survey base maps, public works/ utilities, land holdings, housing, tourism and historical sites, community 911 emergency response, Indian Lands Registry System, and natural resources. Connecting information to the land is not a new concept for First Nations, traditionally it has always been a way of life; only technology is new.*

## Introduction

This paper will discuss the information management needs of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and the development and implementation of a Native needs specific GIS for First Nations. Furthermore, community enhancement GIS applications will be presented along with some of the issues involved in the search and development of a Native GIS.

## Background

The Iroquois Confederacy was originally composed of the Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, and Seneca Nations. In the early 1700's the Tuscarora joined the Confederacy and thus became the Sixth Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy.

Today Six Nations of the Grand River Community is the largest populated First Nation in Canada. It is situated in the centre of the most populated and industrialized area of Canada in Southern Ontario. With a total membership of 19,558 (December 1997), Six

Nations consists of approximately 47,000 acres of land, most of which is under Certificates of Possession. There are 9,922 members who currently reside on the territory. The principle community is Ohsweken and is considered an urban centre.

Administering services and overseeing various mandates for the Six Nations are eleven separate departments. These departments include: Public Works, Health Services, Social Services, Economic Development, Housing, Lands Research, Central Administration, Welfare, Lands/Membership, Parks and Recreation and Secondary Services. Most of these departments have sub-departments under them such as Tourism, Forestry, Correctional Services, to name a few.

## A Need for a Information Management System

With the development of the Land Claims Policy in the early 1970's, Six Nations became involved in research into the Land