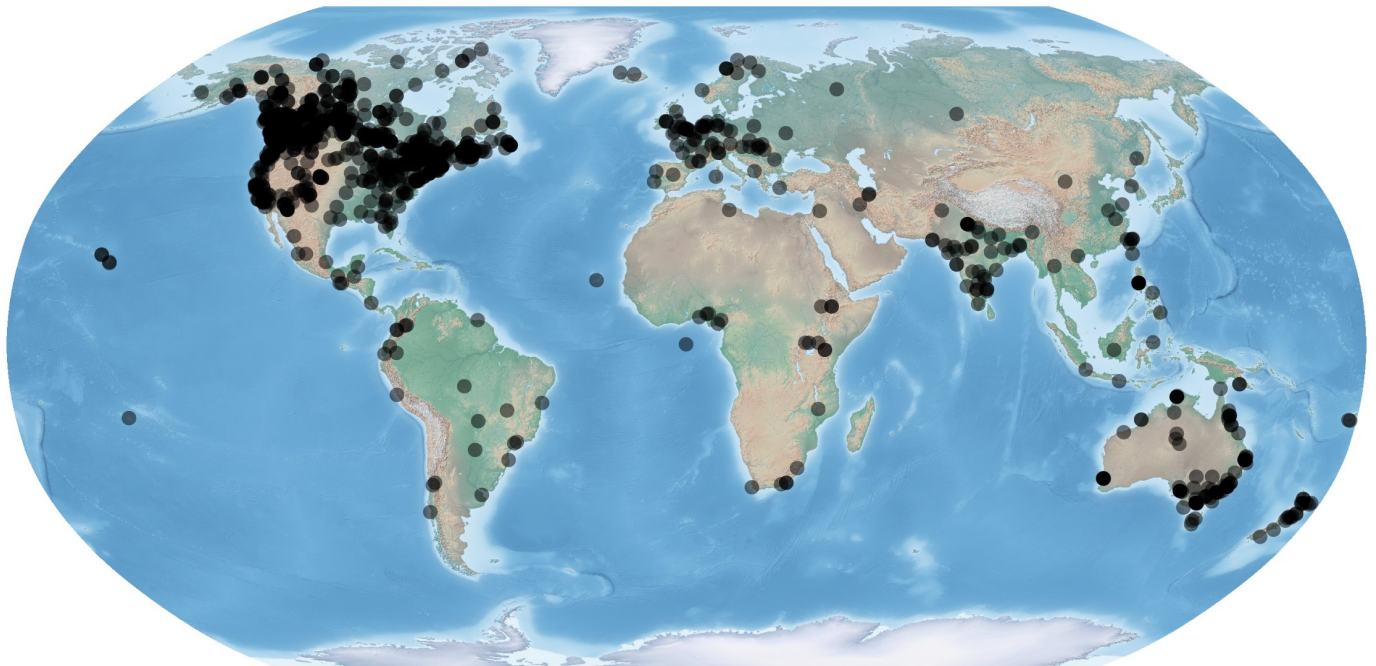


# The Aboriginal Mapping Network



**Introduction /** All around the world, Indigenous peoples are facing issues—such as land claims, treaty negotiations, access to resources, and resource development—which impact on their rights and title. The Aboriginal Mapping Network (AMN), a cooperative website found at [nativemaps.org](http://nativemaps.org), was developed as a support tool for those going through such processes.

## **Objective /**

The goal of the AMN is to facilitate the networking of First Nation and Indigenous mappers and to address current issues relevant to Aboriginal mapping. It does this by providing access to a collection of resources that will give answers to common questions regarding mapping, information management, GIS and other technical issues, as well as publishing best practices on these. In building this network, a venue has been created where people can share experiences,

information and ideas, thus promoting communication and enhancing community work. By teaming innovation and technology with community vitality, bridging hierarchical gaps between decision makers, technicians and communities, the AMN assists people to use GIS as a tool to assert Aboriginal Rights and Title.

## **The beginning /**

Established in 1998 as a non-profit, joint initiative of the Gitksan and Ahousaht First

*MAP /  
AMN users  
around the  
world*

Nations and Ecotrust Canada, the AMN began life as a simple knowledge sharing forum for local First Nations technicians, leaders and decision makers. It has since become a valuable strategic resource for practitioners of traditional knowledge mapping around the world.

### How it works /

Acting as a virtual library service, the AMN aids in effective information management, GIS, resource management and environmental planning by providing a forum to diversify knowledge base and learn from others facing similar issues. The AMN supports four main areas of activity:

**1. An AMN website** A dynamic, interactive website, [nativemaps.org](http://nativemaps.org) hosts a wealth of information where mappers can find information that includes: data sources; training resources; funding; and relevant, timely news stories.

**2. International conferencing & workshops** The agendas for mapping and GIS conferences are usually set by industry or government, rarely addressing issues from a local perspective. To help change this, the AMN is committed to periodically hosting an international conference, where First Nations present mapping issues and oversee planning. The AMN also hosts informal workshops on common themes that surface from website feedback and direct discussions with First Nations and GIS technicians. Examples include:

- *Moving Traditional Use Study Information Into a GIS: Challenges and Methods*, co-hosted with the Tsleil-Waututh Nation;
- *Crown Land Referrals: A First Nations'*

*Approach*, co-hosted with the Sliammon First Nation;

- *Provincial Data for Landscape Analysis: Limitations and Applications*, co-hosted with the Heiltsuk Nation.

**3. Publications** The AMN partners with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs to co-produce a publication series relating to cultural mapping and land use and occupancy research. This has led to dozens of useful publications, including:

- *Living Proof: The Essential Data-Collection Guide for Indigenous Use-and-Occupancy Map Surveys*, Terry N. Tobias;
- *Chief Kerry's Moose: A Guidebook to Land Use and Occupancy Mapping, Research Design and Data Collection*, Terry N. Tobias
- *A Voice on the Land: An Indigenous Peoples' Guide to Forest Certification in Canada*, Russell Collier, Ben Parfitt and Donovan Woollard.
- *A New Trail*—a funding guide written to help First Nations finance their GIS and planning activities.

**4. Access to tools** The AMN gives users access to a number of tools, developed in partnership with members, to help inform decision making on land and water use, and help users respond more effectively to third party land development referrals. Examples include Living Atlas [livingatlas.org](http://livingatlas.org) and Terratruth [terratruth.info](http://terratruth.info).

Content and direction of the AMN is decided by First Nation committees and through website feedback. Ecotrust Canada takes responsibility for maintaining the website, co-hosting workshops, facilitating publications, and assisting with fundraising.

### More information /

[www.nativemaps.org](http://www.nativemaps.org)

[ecotrust.ca/fisheries/connecting-native-mappers-ahousaht-africa](http://ecotrust.ca/fisheries/connecting-native-mappers-ahousaht-africa)

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**amn**

ABORIGINAL MAPPING NETWORK

Ecotrust Canada is an enterprising non-profit whose purpose is to build the conservation economy. Working at the intersection of conservation and community economic development, we promote innovation and provide services for communities, First Nations and enterprises to green and grow their local economies. Our work is innovative, entrepreneurial, partnership-based and relentlessly practical.