



Daycholah Center

“Naming is the beginning of justice.”

– Robin Wall Kimmerer

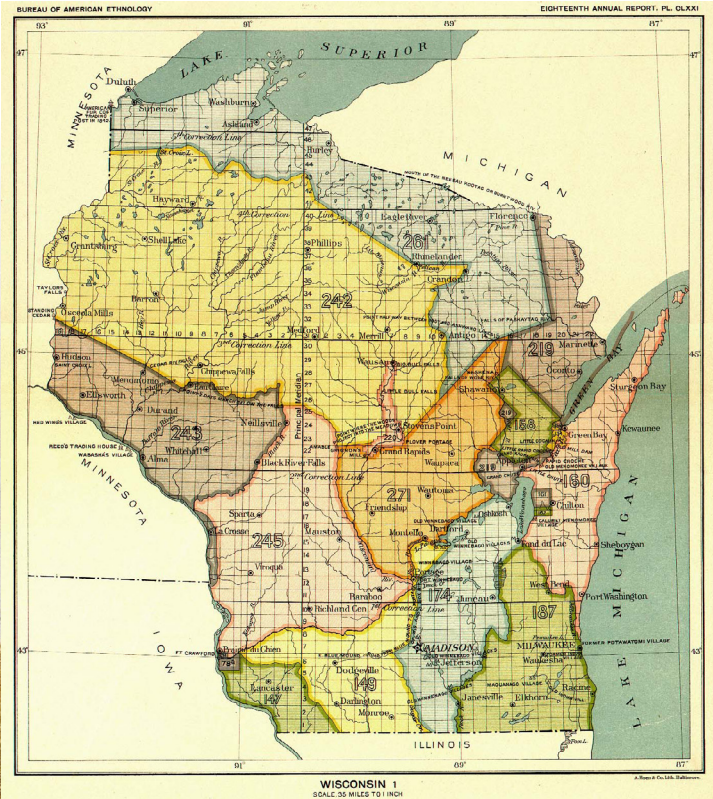


INTRODUCTION

Awareness and Opportunity

The renaming of Pilgrim Center to Daycholah Center—the original Hocak (Ho-Chunk) name for Green Lake—is the culmination of awareness and opportunity presented following the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery by the Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ at their 2019 annual meeting. United Church Camps Inc. (UCCI) Outdoor Ministry has a unique role and opportunity to restore the voice of Native Americans and recognize their stewardship of this sacred place.

American Colonization and the Doctrine of Discovery



Map of lands in present-day Wisconsin ceded to the United States by Ojibwe (242), Dakota (243) and Winnebago leaders (245) in land cession treaties signed in 1837
1899, Indian Land Cessions in the United States, 1784-1894, United States Serial Set, Number 4015, Charles C. Royce, Public Domain/Wikipedia Commons

Understanding the name change begins with understanding what the Doctrine of Discovery allowed. The Wisconsin UCC Resolution of Witness summarizes the Doctrine of Discovery:

“This Doctrine authorized the genocide of Native Peoples and the theft of Native Lands. The Indigenous Peoples were told that God has declared that the Pope rules all people, regardless of their law, sect, or belief. This includes Christians, Moors, Jews, Gentiles, or any other sect. The Native Americans were to come forward of their own free will to convert to Catholicism or... with the help of God we shall use force against you, declaring war upon you from all sides and with all possible means, and we shall bind you to the yoke of the Church and Their Highnesses; we shall enslave your persons, wives, and sons, sell you or dispose of you as the King sees fit; we shall seize your possessions and harm you as much as we can as disobedient and resisting vassals.”

In 1823, the Doctrine of Discovery became a part of U.S. federal law in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Johnson v. M’Intosh*. Here, Chief Justice John Marshall wrote “the principle of discovery gave European nations an absolute right to New World lands.”

The U.S. government had the legal authority to exclude, remove and ignore Native American property. By asserting the right to claim indigenous lands, they silenced Native Americans for hundreds of years. This power continues to be exercised in frequent injustices against tribal communities, including the Standing Rock Sioux and the Dakota Access Pipeline.



IMPORTANCE

The Power of a Name

Such injustices have not been limited to territorial intrusion, however. The exploitation of ideological and cultural power has seen many Native American lands become represented by names chosen by people who came after them.

In her essay “Speaking of Nature,” author Robin Wall Kimmerer, a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, summarizes linguistic imperialism as a tool of colonization, “meant to obliterate history and the visibility of the people who were displaced along with their languages.”

“Thankfully, human history is marked by an ever-expanding recognition of personhood, from the time when aboriginals were not seen as human, when slaves were counted as three-fifths of a person, and when a woman was worth less than a man. Language, personhood, and politics have always been linked to human rights. Will we have the wisdom to expand the circle yet again? **Naming is the beginning of justice.**”

PROCESS AND COMMITMENTS

Commitment to Mission and Shared Values

The first indigenous principle declares: “Respect the Earth and have a Sacred Regard for All Living Things.” The UCCI Mission Statement shares this value and reads: “We will love God, all others, and the earth.” With these core values aligned, we are taking the next step in applying them to ourselves with the formal renaming of Pilgrim Center to Daycholah Center.

First Indigenous Principle

**Respect the Earth and
have a Sacred Regard for
All Living Things**

UCCI Mission Statement

**We will Love God,
All Others,
and the Earth**

The Renaming Process

Members of the Ho-Chunk Nation, the Alliance for Justice and the Reclaiming Sacred Spaces Collaborative Team visited Pilgrim Center in April 2021.



Larry Littlegeorge (left) and Ritchie Brown (right) share a map of the grounds.



Members walking the trails and identifying effigy mounds.

With hearts set toward reparation and reconciliation, UCCI engaged in a 3-year process to listen to the Ho-Chunk community and to learn and understand the effects our history has had. This dialogue was led by The Hocak United Church of Christ at the Indian Mission in Black River Falls, Wisconsin, and facilitated by The Alliance for Justice. This collaborative and deliberative journey included a diverse set of stakeholders and has focused on the impact of words and the associations they can bring with them—in this case, including “pilgrim” in Pilgrim Center.

“Many reading this article might ask, ‘What is wrong or offensive with the name ‘Pilgrim’?’ ‘Why is this such a big deal?’ In my experience and education growing up in southeast WI, the history of the Pilgrims, Puritans, idealized Thanksgivings, westward expansion, and the settling of this ‘new country’ were all spoken of positively from a European Colonist perspective,” said United Church Camps, Inc. (UCCI) Chaplain James Schleif. “As my life experience and education broadened, I learned that there is a quite different perspective from a Native American experience. Considering the native perspective, we might have a better understanding of how a name like “Pilgrim” would be offensive. In some ways, the landing of the Pilgrims and Puritans began the end of their way of life. This change of name and the educational opportunities that it will provide is one small reparative step in building strong, supportive, and sustained positive relationships with our indigenous siblings.”

Commitment to Community and Place

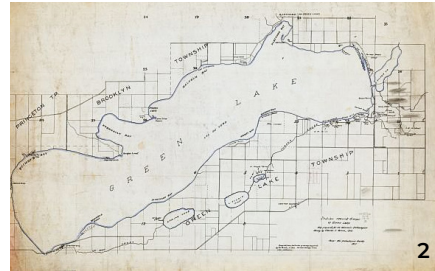
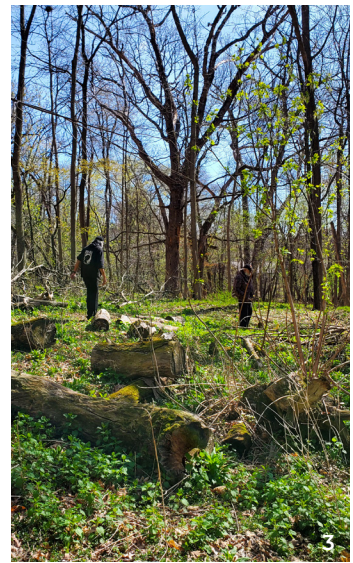
“The Green Lake site has always had spiritual significance as a gathering place of the Ho-Chunk people centuries before Columbus landed on Turtle Island,” said Larry Littlegeorge, member of the Ho-Chunk Nation and Chair of the Alliance for Justice.

Native Americans called the body of water Daycholah, which means Green Lake. Historical texts and anecdotes infer a location on the south shore that hosted various ceremonies and celebrations. Effigy mounds exist on the land and provide evidence of the spiritual significance of this place.

Outdoor Ministry on this land began in 1902 with the founding of The Green Lake Bible Institute.

According to UCCI Historian, Rev. Jan Davis, “During the summers of 1948-1951, and possibly 1952, the Junior Hi Camps at Pilgrim Center were called Daychola. During the same time, the daily newspaper at a Senior Hi Camp was called Daychola News.”

The new name combines the deep spiritual naming of Green Lake by the Ho-Chunk people with the first name of the camp—Green Lake Bible Institute.



1) Winnebago Encampment by American artist Seth Eastman circa 1870 2) Map of Indian Mounds in the Green Lake area 3) Ho-Chunk and Alliance for Justice members on sacred ground at Daycholah Center



Historical images: 1) Green Lake Bible Institute 2) Pilgrim Camp welcome sign, c. 1950s 3) Pilgrim Center showing evidence of an idealized version of colonization, c. late 1960s

Commitment to a Shared Future

The United Church of Christ (UCC) has a long history of social justice ministries and engagement. This history provides a foundation we look to build upon. We seek to care for creation, inspire and challenge one another, make courageous choices, and live out shared values.

“Renaming is an appropriate and necessary first step on our journey toward a future where all are welcome and included and have a voice,” says Judnard Henry, Daycholah Center Managing Director. “We will continue to grow as a sacred place of love, a sanctuary, a community of inclusion and belonging, a place to learn and connect more deeply to God and all others.”

Glenn Svetnicka, UCCI Executive Director, echoes this goal: “We recognize that the most important voices throughout this process have been the voices of the Ho-Chunk people—we have listened and taken leadership from them and our decision is intended to restore their voice and acknowledge their stewardship of this land. With God’s grace, we must stand in solidarity with our indigenous sisters and brothers, and while we believe this is an important step, it is just that—a step. There is a long path in front of us and we will strive to continue learning and improving.”



Rededication

A formal rededication of the facility took place on Indigenous Peoples’ Day, Monday, October 11, 2021, which occurred during the 400th anniversary of the first Thanksgiving. The ceremony included speakers representing the Ho-Chunk Nation, the Hocak United Church of Christ, the Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ, and UCCI. A fire circle with a presentation of the Ho-Chunk Nation flag and a shared meal followed.

Land Acknowledgment

UCCI's campuses Cedar Valley, Daycholah Center, and Moon Beach are located on the ancestral homelands of the Menominee, Ho-Chunk, and Ojibwa Nations. We acknowledge these first nations communities who have stewarded this land throughout the generations and pay respect to their elders past and present.

Thank You

UCCI is deeply grateful to those whose life work has been to educate and inspire necessary change.

Hocak United Church of Christ at the Indian Mission
in Black River Falls

Ho-Chunk Nation Government

The Alliance for Justice, Inc.

Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ

RECLAIMING SACRED SPACES COLLABORATIVE TEAM:

Larry Littlegeorge, Cari Fay, Cecelia Kraus, Joe Scarry,
Rev. Jan Davis, Judnard Henry, Lisa Hart,
Rev. Bob Ullman, Rev. James Schleif

RESOURCES

Learn about Wisconsin First Nations and the Ho-Chunk Nation

wisconsinfirstnations.org/ho-chunk-nation

The Alliance for Justice

www.wcucc.org/justice-ministries/racial-justice/the-alliance-for-justice

Read Robin Wall Kimmerer's essay "Speaking of Nature"

www.globalonenessproject.org/library/essays/speaking-nature

Wisconsin Conference UCC Resources on the Doctrine of Discovery

www.wcucc.org/justice-ministries/racial-justice/doctrine-of-discovery-study-resources

Frequently Asked Questions

ucci.org/daycholah-center-faqs

United Church Camps, Inc. Outdoor Ministry

ucci.org

