

SHAKES
PEARE
FESTIVAL

The Tempest

2025-26 Study Guide

ABOUT THIS STUDY GUIDE

The Colorado Shakespeare Festival will soon send actors to your school as part of a Shakespeare & Violence Prevention project. This study guide is a resource for you, whether you are an administrator, counselor, teacher, or student. Our program is most successful when schools have prepared in advance, so we encourage you to use this study guide to connect the material to your curriculum. Shakespeare offers a wonderful opportunity to explore meaningful questions, and we encourage you and your students to engage deeply with those questions.

This study guide was written and edited by Dr. Amanda Giguere, Dr. Heidi Schmidt, with input from Tami LoSasso (Colorado Department of Education), Dr. Lena Heilmann (Colorado's Office of Suicide Prevention), Dr. Beverly Kingston and Laurie Keith (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence), Brett Cogswell (Safe2Tell), Rebecca Brown Adelman (Applied Theatre consultant), Professor Kevin Rich (CU Theatre & Dance), and Josue Miranda (Spanish translator).

ABOUT SHAKESPEARE & VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The **Colorado Shakespeare Festival (CSF)** partners with CU Boulder's **Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV)** and the **Department of Theatre & Dance** to create a touring program that increases awareness of Shakespeare and violence prevention.

Our actors will visit your school to perform an abridged three-actor version of *The Tempest* that explores the cycle of violence, using research from CSPV. In a 30-minute performance and 50-minute classroom workshops, we draw parallels between Shakespeare's world and our own. We recommend the performance for grades 3-5.

Theatre is about teamwork, empathy, and change. When your students watch the play, they will observe misunderstandings, mistreatment, cruelty, and reconciliation. They'll see examples of unhealthy and destructive relationships, as well as characters who become "upstanders"—people who make the choice to help. This play is intended to open up the dialogue about the cycle of violence and mistreatment—and to remind us all that change is always possible.

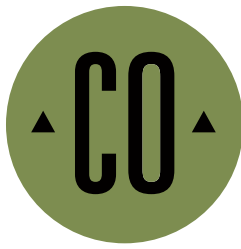
The post-show classroom workshops use theatre activities to increase your students' ability to work as a team and be upstanders. We employ empathy-building and team-building activities, key elements in creating a positive school environment.

Our short visit to your school aims to inspire your students with live, professional theatre, but the work does not end when our actors depart. We encourage you to continue this conversation after our visit in order to create positive change in your own school setting.

COLORADO CURRICULUM STANDARDS

This program was developed with a standards-based focus in multiple content areas. Content areas addressed by the performances, classroom workshops, and the contents of this study guide include:

- Reading, Writing, and Communicating
- Drama and Theatre Arts
- Comprehensive Health
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Colorado Essential Skills
- School Counseling Standards



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ABOUT THE TEMPEST

Why this play?

When all her enemies are shipwrecked on her magical island home, Prospero must choose between seeking revenge, or forgiving those who did her wrong.

The Tempest shows characters caught in a cycle of violence; Prospero was deeply hurt by her brother, Antonio, many years ago. Since that time, Prospero has been plotting revenge. Now, she finally has the chance to get even with her deceitful brother. But what does it mean to “get even?” Who has Prospero harmed along the way, while she was fixated on avenging her brother’s cruelty? Has Prospero, in the process of “righting the wrongs” committed by her brother, committed similar wrongs herself? What will it take for Prospero to truly forgive someone who has hurt her? Can Prospero learn to move forward in a healthy way?

Three-Person Cast

Shakespeare’s version of this play has over 20 characters. We combined some roles and eliminated others but we still have 9 characters, all played by only 3 actors. The challenge becomes how we differentiate these characters—look out for different costume pieces to help you keep track!

Gender and Casting

In Shakespeare’s time, only men were allowed to perform publicly, so Shakespeare’s plays feature a LOT of male characters. These restrictions don’t make sense in today’s world, so in our production, we have changed the gender identity of some of these characters. We hope to carve out new possibilities within these 400-year-old plays, so that the plays reflect our own time.

Bilingual Shakespeare

In this production, some characters speak occasionally in Spanish. Shakespeare belongs to all of us, and we hope that when you see a Spanish-speaking character, this helps you see Shakespeare’s ability to cross boundaries and connect people from different backgrounds. Whether or not you speak Spanish, how does this choice impact the way you listen to the play?

KINDNESS IS NEVER A SIGN OF WEAKNESS



SAFE2TELL provides students, parents, and community members a safe and anonymous way to report information about any issues that concern their safety or the safety of others. You can use your voice to make the life of someone else better. Sometimes if YOU don’t speak up for someone, no one else will. You can make a difference. Safe2Tell will not ask for your name or contact information when you make a report. Safe2Tell sends the report to the school who then looks into the safety concern.

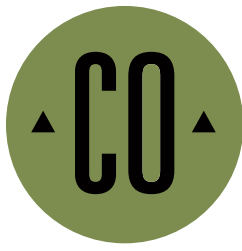
REPORT: (877) 542-7233 | safe2tell.org | Mobile app | Text S2TCO to 738477

Colorado Shakespeare Festival Education Programs

coloradoshakes.org/education
csfedout@colorado.edu
(303) 735-1181

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence

colorado.edu/cspv
(303) 492-1032



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How Do I Prepare?

TEACHER CHECKLIST

This might be your students' first exposure to theatre and/or Shakespeare, so we recommend establishing some norms with your students to prepare for this program:

- In theatre, actors are vulnerable onstage; they step into the shoes of another character (metaphorically) and help us see the world from another person's perspective. For actors to do their jobs, they need to know that their audience will respect their work, their bravery, and their honesty.
- We will respect the actors, we will respect one another, and we will respect ourselves. How do we cultivate a classroom of mutual respect?
- Trying new things is hard! When the actors visit our classroom, we might be asked to step out of our comfort zone and participate in some activities with the actors. Let's support one another for being brave, being honest, and for trying new things.
- The Shakespeare & Violence Prevention post-performance workshops emphasize three key ideas: Teamwork, Empathy, and Change. What do these things have in common? How can we prepare ourselves to work as a team, practice empathy, and rehearse the change we'd like to see in our community?

How do I prepare my students for the play?

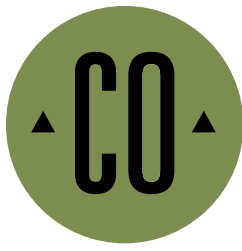
- ☐ Review Meet the Characters (pg. 4-5) and Things to Look For (pg. 9) with your students. You can print these pages as handouts to familiarize your students with the characters, plot, and some themes of the play.
- ☐ Use the Mini-Lesson Plan (pg. 6) and the activities (pg. 7-8) to help your students think through some of the big questions presented in *The Tempest* in advance of the performance.
- ☐ Discuss appropriate theatre etiquette with your students. Our performance is frequently interactive (like Shakespeare's original performances). Students are encouraged to laugh and applaud when they enjoy the show, though we ask them not to have private conversations, use cell phones, eat during the performance, or otherwise distract the performers or their fellow students. Remind them that just as they can see and hear the actors, the actors can also see and hear the audience.

How do I prepare for post-show workshops?

- ☐ Be ready to participate and co-facilitate with our teaching artist. The more involved you are, the more your students learn!
- ☐ Talk with your class about the upcoming actor-led theatre workshop. Set expectations about trying new things and respecting one another.
- ☐ Push desks/chairs to the side of your classroom to create an open, movement-friendly space.
- ☐ At the end of the workshop, our teaching artist will step out of the room while you conduct an anonymous, 3-question survey with your students. Don't worry about preparing - they'll give you a card with the questions pre-printed.

What should I do after the visit?

- ☐ Take the 5-minute survey in your thank you email to let us know what you thought.
- ☐ Use the Discussion Questions (pg. 10) to have a follow-up discussion with your students about the performance and the workshops.
- ☐ Look for ways to integrate the performance and workshop in your units throughout the year by tying your lesson plans back to the ideas and questions posed by the visit from the CSF actors.



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Meet the Characters

(and the actors who play them)

12 YEARS AGO IN MILAN

Prospero, the Duke, was betrayed by her brother, **Antonio**, who turned her friends against her and stole her position. Prospero was banished from Milan and cast out to sea, along with her young daughter **Miranda**. They landed on a small island and started a new life. Prospero uses magic to rule the island, and two island natives (**Caliban** and a spirit named **Ariel**) now work for her.



Antonio



Prospero



Miranda



Ariel



Caliban

AS THE PLAY BEGINS

For 12 years, Prospero has planned her revenge. She and Ariel use magic to create a giant storm (a tempest), which shipwrecks her former enemies on the shore of the island. Ariel separates the survivors into 3 groups.

Antonio (Prospero's brother) is stranded with **King Alonso** of Naples (a neighbor kingdom to Milan).

Stephano and **Trinculo** (King Alonso's butler and jester) find each other on the island and believe everyone else on the ship has drowned.

Ferdinand is the Prince of Naples, Alonso's son. Stranded separately from the rest of his shipmates, he assumes he is the only survivor - and therefore King of Naples. He meets Miranda on the island and falls in love with her, just as Prospero planned.



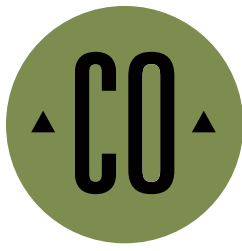
Antonio & Alonso



Stephano & Trinculo



Ferdinand



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Meet the Characters

(and the actors who play them)

THE PLOTS THICKEN!

Prospero's long years of planning are finally coming together, but she's not the only one plotting...

Ariel puts a sleep spell on **King Alonso**, which gives **Antonio** the chance to think of an evil plan. He stole Prospero's Dukedom—why not take Alonso's crown and become King of Naples, too? Ariel steps in just in time and prevents Antonio from making a harmful choice.

Meanwhile, **Caliban** meets **Stephano** and **Trinculo** and decides to show them around the island. Convinced Stephano would be a better (and nicer) leader than Prospero, Caliban urges his new friends to overthrow Prospero and become the new rulers of the island. Stephano likes this idea, but Trinculo is skeptical.



Ariel
Antonio & Alonso



Caliban
Stephano & Trinculo

"THE RARER ACTION IS IN VIRTUE THAN IN VENGEANCE."

As Prospero gathers everyone together to finish her perfect revenge, Ariel persuades her to go easy on her brother.

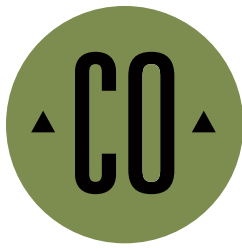
Prospero reveals her true identity to her brother **Antonio**, reunites **Prince Ferdinand** with his father, **King Alonso**, and presents the newly engaged couple, **Ferdinand** and **Miranda**.

Prospero gives up her magic, frees **Ariel** and **Caliban**, and gets ready to go home to Milan. Before she sets sail, she asks for forgiveness: "As you from crimes would pardoned be, let your indulgence set me free."



SWING / STAGE MANAGER

Our stage manger, Emma, does a lot of work backstage to make sure this performance goes well. She is also a "swing," or understudy. She has learned ALL the roles in this production so if someone gets sick, Emma can perform in their place!



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Mini-Lesson Plan

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS | BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Rationale: This activity will introduce students to foundational themes in *The Tempest* (such as community building) and encourage them to develop their own thoughts prior to a violence prevention workshop with a Colorado Shakespeare Festival actor.

Objective: Students will independently strategize ideas about interpersonal relationships, put themselves in the shoes of a community leader, analyze text from the play, and participate in a class discussion about building healthy communities.

Instructions: Use any relevant information from the Study Guide to introduce some of the characters, plot points and themes of *The Tempest* to your students.

Share the graphic organizer (pg. 7-8) with your students. After the students have completed their work, invite them to share their answers in pairs or create a class brainstorming session on empathy.

As a class (or independently), review the “Look Fors” (pg. 9) before the show and complete after the performance.

COLORADO CURRICULUM STANDARDS

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/standards>

Reading, Writing and Communicating: Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening

- Prepared Graduates: collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully; pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others; and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective

Reading, Writing and Communicating: Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes

- Prepared Graduates: read a wide range of literary texts to build knowledge and to better understand the human experience

Drama and Theatre Arts: Standard 3: Critically Respond

- Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
- Connect artistic experiences to our world; past, present and future

Comprehensive Health: Standard 4: Prevention and Risk Management

- Prepared Graduates: apply knowledge and skills that promote healthy, violence-free relationships

ADDITIONAL CONNECTIONS

SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) Core Competencies <https://casel.org>

- Self Awareness
- Self Management
- Social Awareness
- Responsible Decision-Making
- Relationship Skills

Colorado Essential Skills

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/essentialskills-pdf>

- Self-awareness
- Personal responsibility
- Adaptability / flexibility
- Perseverance / resilience
- Critical thinking / problem-solving
- Creativity / innovation
- Inquiry / analysis
- Informed risk taking
- Collaboration / teamwork

School Counseling Standards (American School Counselor Association www.schoolcounselor.org)

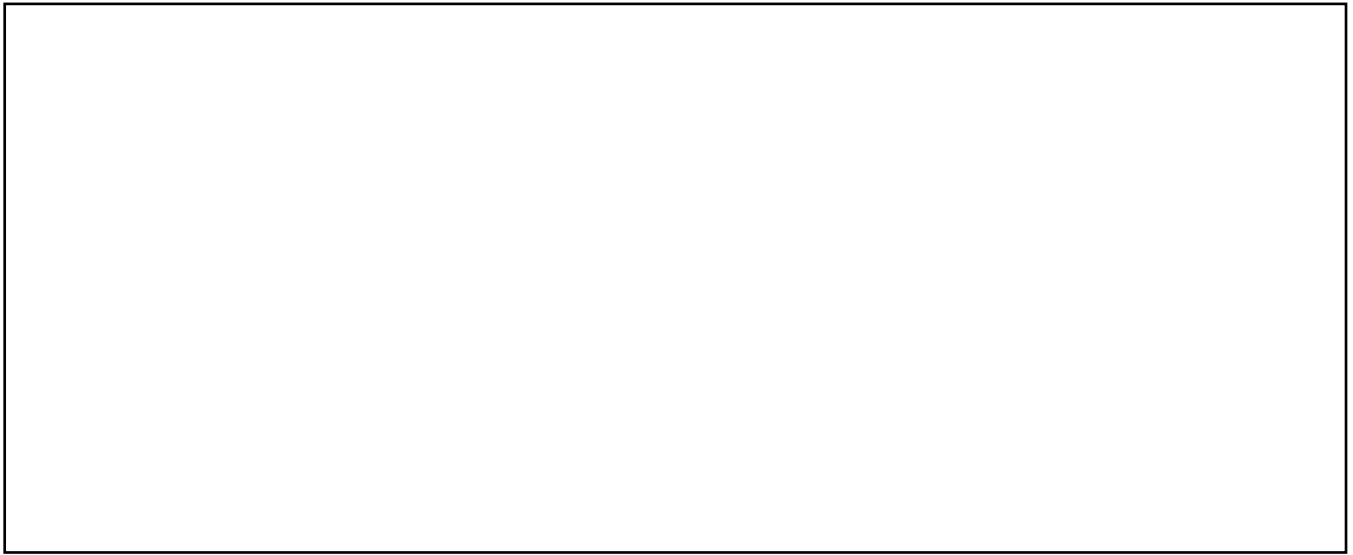
- Mindset standards: Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being / Sense of acceptance, respect, support and inclusion for self and others in the school environment
- Behavior Standards: Ethical decision-making and social responsibility / Social Skills / Empathy Positive, respectful and supportive relationships with students who are similar to and different from them

NAME: _____

Before you see *The Tempest*: Imagination Activity, Part 1

Actors from the Colorado Shakespeare Festival will be putting on a play for you called The Tempest. In the play, when Prospero's brother Antonio is cruel to her, Prospero is stranded on an island with her daughter, Miranda. She has to start a new life in this strange new place. What if you found yourself stranded in an unfamiliar place? How would you start over, and what would you need to make your new home a healthy, happy community?

1. Draw a picture of yourself on your new island home. What do you have with you? Supplies? Another person?



2. When you arrive at the island, you meet other people who already live there who are very different from you. How do you create a healthy, happy community with them? What are the three most important rules you would agree on and why?

Rule 1. _____	Why? _____
_____	_____
Rule 2. _____	Why? _____
_____	_____
Rule 3. _____	Why? _____
_____	_____

3. If another person on island hurt my feelings, here are three healthy ways I could respond:

1.	_____

2.	_____

3.	_____

NAME: _____

Before you see *The Tempest*: Imagination Activity, Part 2

The speech below is from *The Tempest*. In this speech, when a group of people are stranded on the island, a man named Gonzalo (who will not appear in our 3-actor / 9-character performance) imagines what he would do if he were the ruler of the island. Shakespeare uses some words that might not be familiar to you in this speech. As a class, review what these words mean, then read the speech out loud, dividing the lines amongst the students.

commonwealth: community/nation	magistrate: a person who administers the law	tilth: farming labour
contraries: not the usual way things are done	boorn, bound of land: both terms refer to land boundaries/property lines	engine: machinery
traffic: business, commerce		foison: plenty, abundance

(from Folger Digital Texts)

Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,
And were the king on it, what would I do?
In the **commonwealth** I would by **contraries**
Execute all things, for no kind of **traffic**
Would I admit; no name of **magistrate**;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty
And use of service, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard—none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine or oil;
No occupation, all men idle, all;
And women, too, but innocent and pure;
All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavor; treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any **engine**
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth
Of its own kind all **foison**, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people.

Your Version

Had I plantation on this isle, my lord,
And were the leader on it, what would I do?

As a class, discuss the following questions:

Share ideas as a class, and ask thoughtful follow-up questions after each person shares.

1. What would Gonzalo keep out of this new community? Why?
2. What would this community be like to live in?
3. If you were the ruler of a new community, what would be most important to you? Would you ban any items? Would you require anything of your citizens?
4. Now imagine you're a citizen of this new community instead of its leader. Do you still like the way you've set up the community? Would you change anything?

Now, write your own version of the speech using the spaces above!

NAME: _____

As you watch *The Tempest*, look for:

A POWER IMBALANCE

Example(s) _____

AN INSTANCE OF BULLYING

Example(s) _____

SOMEONE HURTING ANOTHER PERSON TO GET WHAT THEY WANT

Example(s) _____

SOMEONE ASKING FOR HELP

Example(s) _____

SOMEONE WHO CHANGES FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END OF THE PLAY

Example(s) _____

AN ACT OF KINDNESS

Example(s) _____

SOMEONE TREATING ANOTHER AS INFERIOR (OR LESS IMPORTANT)

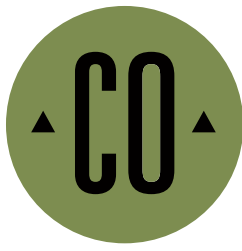
Example(s) _____

What is Bullying Behavior?

Before you see the play, review the definition of bullying:

1. There is an intention to harm (they do it on purpose)
2. It is repeated over time (and often escalates)
3. There is a power imbalance (when one person has more power than another)

As a class, discuss what this means. How is bullying different from other kinds of conflicts? Could some bullying be prevented if we put ourselves in the shoes of others? What do you do when you see bullying behavior?



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After the Performance: Discussion Questions

- What is empathy? Why is it important? Was there ever a time when you “stepped into someone else’s shoes”? What did it teach you?
- Actors use teamwork to trust one another when they are onstage. How is teamwork useful in school?
- How do the characters change from the beginning of the play to the end? What causes these changes? Have you ever noticed a change in your own behavior?
- After Prospero forgives her enemies, what do you think life will be like for her when she leaves the island?
- After Ariel is freed, what do you think the character will do next? What will life be like for Ariel?
- Why do you think Prospero chooses to forgive her brother at the end of the play?
- After Prospero leaves the island, what do you think Caliban will do next? What will life be like for Caliban?
- When Shakespeare’s company first performed this play, all of the actors were men and boys and spoke mostly in English. How do you think changing a character’s gender or language impacts the story?
- Why do you think actors are still performing the plays of Shakespeare? What do the stories have to teach us today?
- How could you apply what you learned from this play here in your school? How about outside of school?

Tips from the Center for the Study & Prevention of Violence

HOW TO BE AN UPSTANDER

- Refuse to join in if someone tries to get you to taunt and torment another person.
- Get a teacher, parent, or other responsible adult to come help. This isn’t snitching. It’s helping. You are saying that you don’t think bullying is acceptable and don’t want anyone to get hurt.
- Try to get the person being bullied to tell a trusted adult. Offer to go with them.
- Tell a trusted adult yourself if the person being bullied is unwilling to report it. Do not let the person behaving as a bully know so that they do not become aggressive toward you.

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEYS

One of the most important components of a safe school is a climate where youth feel secure and supported in their learning environment. As part of the Safe Communities Safe Schools (SCSS) project, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence offers school climate surveys, at a low cost, with options for students, staff, and parents. For more information about our surveys or to administer any of the SCSS Surveys at your school, please contact us via email at cspv@colorado.edu or by phone at 303-492-1032.

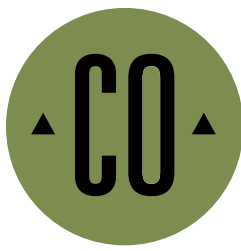
<https://cspv.colorado.edu/what-we-do/surveys/>

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT BULLYING AND YOUTH VIOLENCE

- 5% of students in this country miss school each day because of bullying. That translates to 160,000 students missing school daily.
- 57% of the time, bullying stops in 10 seconds or less when a bystander becomes an upstander.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT LOWER RISK OF VIOLENCE

- Supportive relationships
- Connections with peers, school, family, and community
- Involvement in prosocial activities



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Program Sponsors

"I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks." - *Twelfth Night*

The Colorado Shakespeare Festival is deeply grateful for the support of these generous sponsors, who make the Shakespeare & Violence Prevention program possible.



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SHAKESPEARE & VIOLENCE PREVENTION: A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK FOR EDUCATORS



Shakespeare
& VIOLENCE PREVENTION
A Practical Handbook for Educators
AMANDA GIGUERE



Want to learn more about Violence Prevention and Shakespeare? This new book, authored by CSF Director of Outreach Amanda Giguere, explores 8 Shakespeare plays through the violence-prevention lens. Discover new strategies to approach Shakespeare as you learn about the overlaps between preventing violence and studying Shakespeare. The book includes an appendix of exercises, discussion questions, and activities to implement in the classroom.

Order a copy for your classroom [here](#).

For bulk orders, educator, and special sales, contact Beth Svinarich, beth@upcolorado.com

Land Acknowledgment

We honor and acknowledge that the Colorado Shakespeare Festival resides on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations. We recognize the sophisticated and intricate knowledge systems Indigenous people have developed in relationship to their lands and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land. You can learn more about the original inhabitants where you live by searching your (or your school's) address at native-land.ca