



Haru'tucuma Code of Conduct



Higuayagua is a tribal community that prides itself on the relentless pursuit of knowledge. Our Indigenous ways of knowing stem from rigorous academic research and the oral traditions gathered from extensive interviews with elders and members across generations.

During our evolution from group to tribal family, we learned the true meaning of community and commitment. These lessons will ensure our collective survival.

Our Arawak relatives from Guyana introduced us to a highly complex belief system they call Hariraro Woboroko. Within this tradition are suggestions on how tribal family members are to treat one another to peacefully coexist. In our language, Hariraro Woboroko translates to Haru'tucuma, The Milky Way—the path to the land of the sacred colibrí.

The following are our codes of conduct, ethics, and Tribal rules:

- 1) Tribal Council can vote to amend all rules.
- 2) Some members may not be as spiritually or culturally enlightened as you. Be tolerant and do not offend, as they are not as far along the path. Some are lost, ignorant, angry, possessed by jealousy and conceit, envy, or greed. All these stages are part of the journey.
- 3) The quality of true friendship is not measured by how much you agree but by how well you value and tolerate the opinions of those with whom you disagree.
- 4) Respect the personal social media pages of each member. Do not engage on the offensive with a counterargument or rebuttal, as this invites negative energy on both sides. **All** opinions must be respected. Do not speak when upset, as this makes matters worse. **If an offensive comment directly involves you, reach out to the person privately, not in public, as this makes the entire Tribe look bad.** Take a screenshot of the comment and present it to a council member.
- 5) Always respect the privacy and space of others. Do not touch personal property without permission.
- 6) Do not take what is not yours, whether it is from a person, community, or culture. If you did not earn it, it is not yours. Our Southern relatives have a saying: "There are three Indian rules—don't lie, don't steal, don't be lazy."
- 7) There is a difference between borrowing and appropriating. For example, our language reconstitution efforts contain borrowed words from related

languages. We do not appropriate an entire language, and then claim it is ours.

- 8) Allow everyone the right to self-expression. Honor the thoughts, wishes, and words of others by not interrupting or mocking them.
- 9) Never speak ill of a tribal member. The negative energy you put out into the world will multiply and return to you. Keep a distance from those you do not get along. There is no need to fight or leave the tribe. We must learn peaceful coexistence.
- 10) We all make mistakes; these can be rectified and forgiven. If you continue a pattern of mistakes and misbehavior, this will lead to expulsion.
- 11) Children are our future. Be kind, loving, and giving as we explain, show, and teach them. As tribal people, we look out for their welfare. Establishing bonds is the key to curbing future misunderstandings. Always be truthful, honest, and direct.
- 12) Respect a member's religious beliefs and do not force your beliefs or views onto others. Although Higuayagua follows Taino spiritual beliefs, we understand that we have Christians, Muslims, Jews, Wiccans, Hindus, Buddhists, etc. among us, too. We will not and cannot discriminate against them. How they choose to honor Creator is their business. We only ask that they not express their religious beliefs during Taino Ceremony, social gatherings, or research projects. Part of our mission is trying to understand our ancestral worldview. We do this by looking at the matter with an unfiltered Taino lens.
- 13) Respect must be shown to those serving the community as Cacike, Behike, Matunheri, Bahari/Bahiaro, Tukuda, and Akutu.
- 14) Native people have always treated elders with respect. This tradition must be revived!
- 15) Never walk between people who are conversing.
- 16) Patiently wait until you are acknowledged before speaking.
- 17) Do not interrupt. When directed, speak clearly and in a soft tone. Do not yell.
- 18) Do not speak at a public gathering or in a Council unless expressly invited to do so.
- 19) RESPECT the wisdom of the Tribal Council. When a complaint, idea, or solution is communicated, it is no longer yours alone; it now belongs to the People.
- 20) Once Tribal Council arrives at a decision, respect the decision. Respect demands that no one speaks ill against Tribal Council or the decision concluded.