

Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) Niitsitapi-led Network for Blackfoot Guardianship of Rocky- Mountain East Slopes



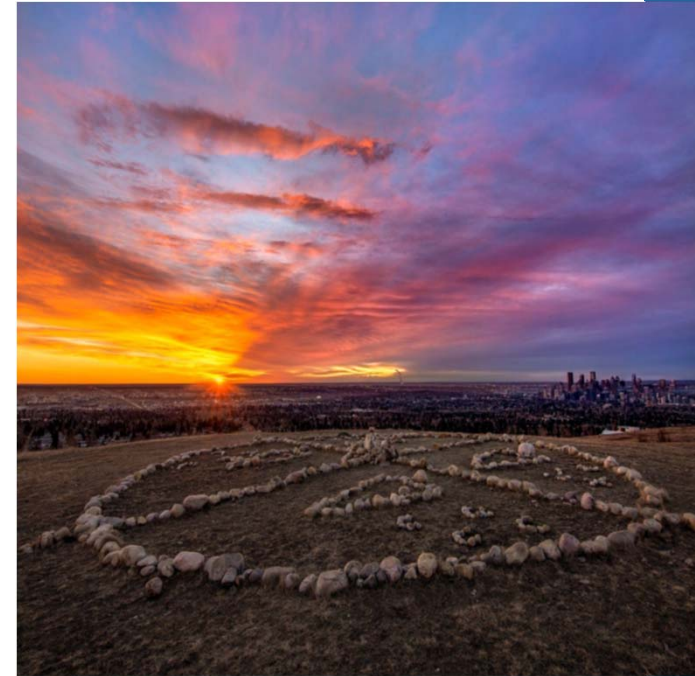
Indigenous Leadership in Caring for the Crown of the Continent Forum

March 14, 2023 Amskapi Piikani

Presenters: Kimmy Houle - Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council
Paulette Fox – Harmony Walkers Inc.

Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy)

- Kainai-Blood Tribe, Siksika, Peigan-Piikani and Aamskapi Pikuni (USA).
- Established to bring the four Nations together and facilitate an integrated and effective approach to implementing initiatives designed for the betterment of the lives of the Siksika (Blackfoot) people.
- Since time immemorial, the Blackfoot, have lived in a territory that stretches from the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta and Saskatchewan to the Yellowstone River in the state of Montana, from the Continental Divide in the west to the Great Sand Hills in the province now known as Saskatchewan and beyond.



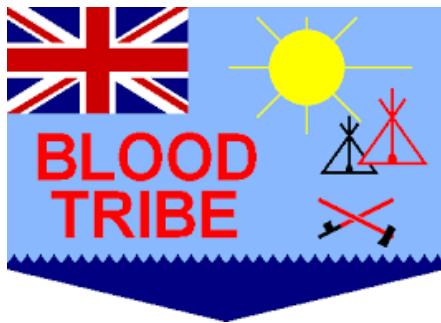
Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy)

VISION Siksikaitsitapi, honouring and utilizing the past, into the present, for the future Blackfoot way of life.

MISSION To collaborate, restore, protect, honor and enhance the collective culture, language and self-identity of the Blackfoot People; and to establish political and economic sovereignty over Blackfoot Territory, including natural resources, for the benefit of current and future generations of the Blackfoot People.



Partners



Project Overview

Blackfoot Guardianship of Rocky-Mountain East Slopes Hub

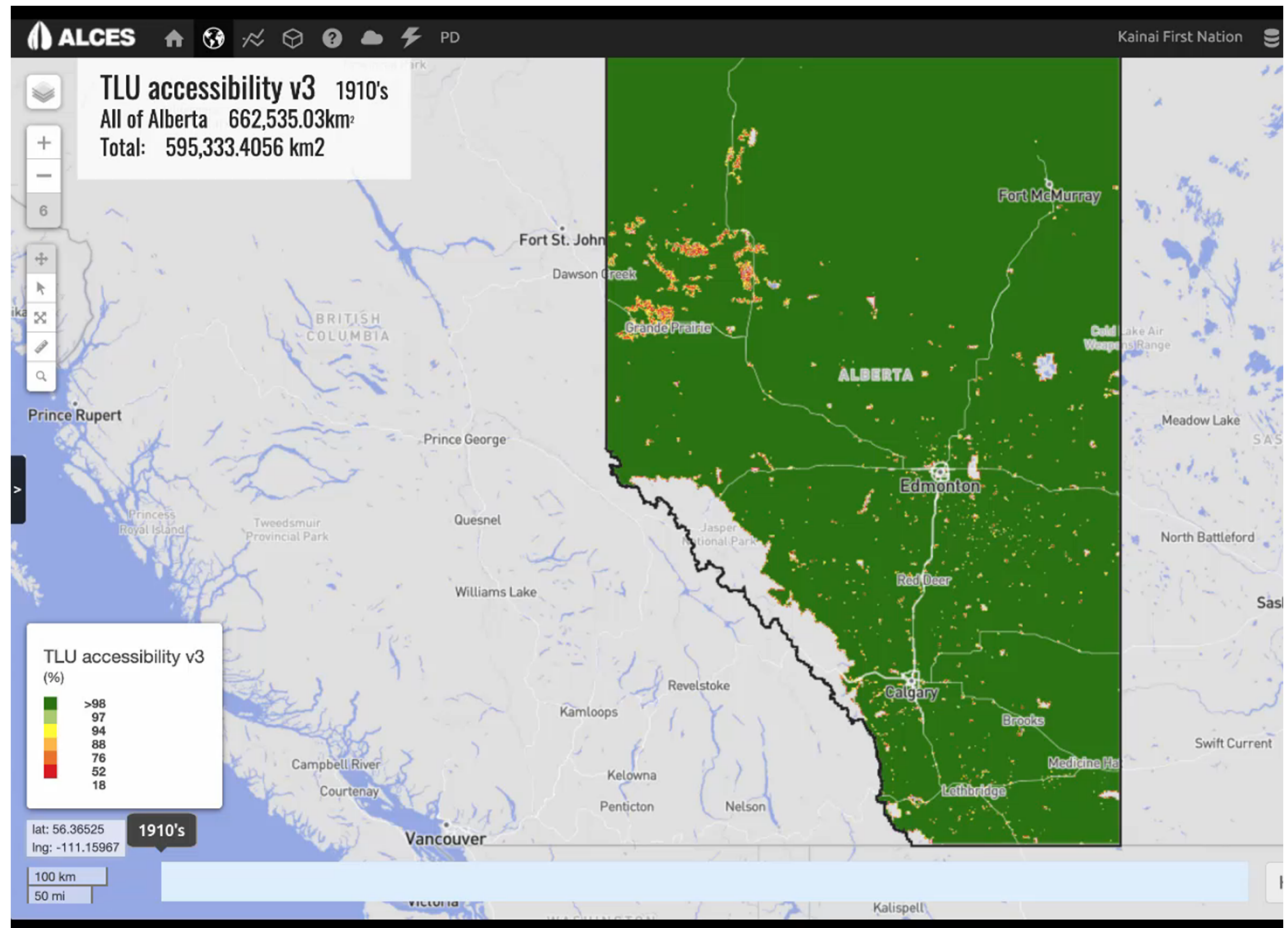
- International *Niitsitapi* - led Network - Blackfoot Confederacy, *Siksikaitsitapii*, Tribal Council
- Years 1-3 – Pilot focus: transboundary region of the east-slopes including the Badger Two- Medicine River watershed, Milk River watershed, Oldman watershed and Bow watershed
- Currently in year 3, complete pilot phase and transition to expansion of Blackfoot guardianship beyond east-slopes (year 4 and beyond)
- Rapid growth of eco-disturbances create an urgent need for protection
- Drawing on and continuing the inherent Blackfoot holistic ways of: Being, Valuing, Knowing and Doing, that form the basis of the hub as a framework for Blackfoot governance.



Time-lapse 1910-2010

Used with permission

Provided by Mike Oka, Blood
Tribe/Kainai Consultation
Coordinator



Priorities

Elevating Blackfoot Ways to ensure that we are protecting our knowledge while building our network's capacity in Western scientific approaches. Our Blackfoot guiding principles provide a compass that culturally orients our work and centers ***Blackfoot ways of being*** as the point of reference from which all project activities originate from.

- 1) **Governance** – revolves around Blackfoot ethics, values and *Pomaaksin*;
- 2) **Blackfoot Indicators** - indicators of ecological, cultural and biological health are rooted in place-based relationships and understood as interconnected through time and space; and
- 3) **Leadership and Action** - knowledge mobilization, benefits to the confederacy, advancing self-determination and pushing back against settler colonialism.

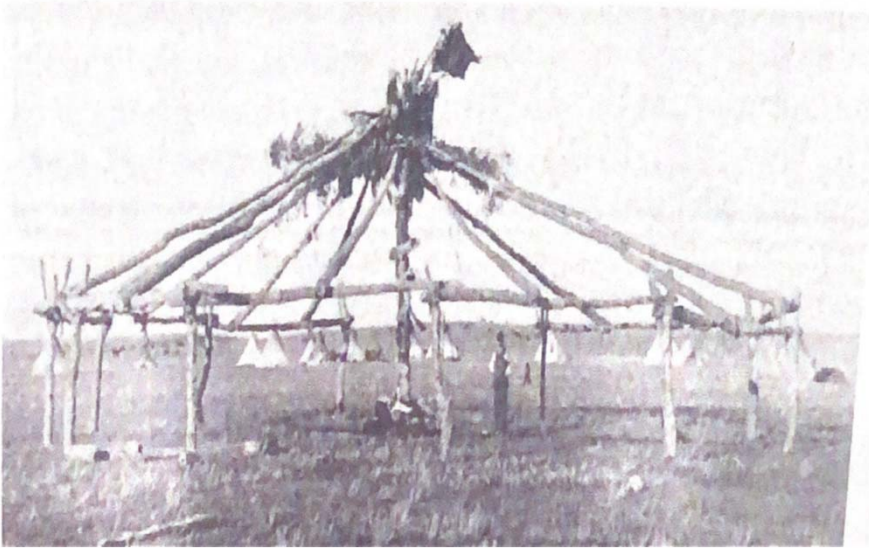


The Niitsitapi-led Network for Blackfoot Guardianship of the Rocky-Mountain East Slopes is guided by the following:

- ❖ To operate from our Blackfoot biocultural indicators which are understood as the embodiment of cultural continuity and include stories, knowledge transfers, pedagogies and access to lands
- ❖ To ensure that spirituality and ceremony are the ethical starting point for action as these keep us in a state of balance with one another, our more than human relatives and our Western partnerships
- ❖ To enhance the work of the four Blackfoot nations through respect and reciprocity to ensure that we protect Blackfoot knowledges and lands
- ❖ To protect our language by paralleling Western partnership activities with our Siksikaitsitapi ways to ensure activities and concepts are reflected through our original language



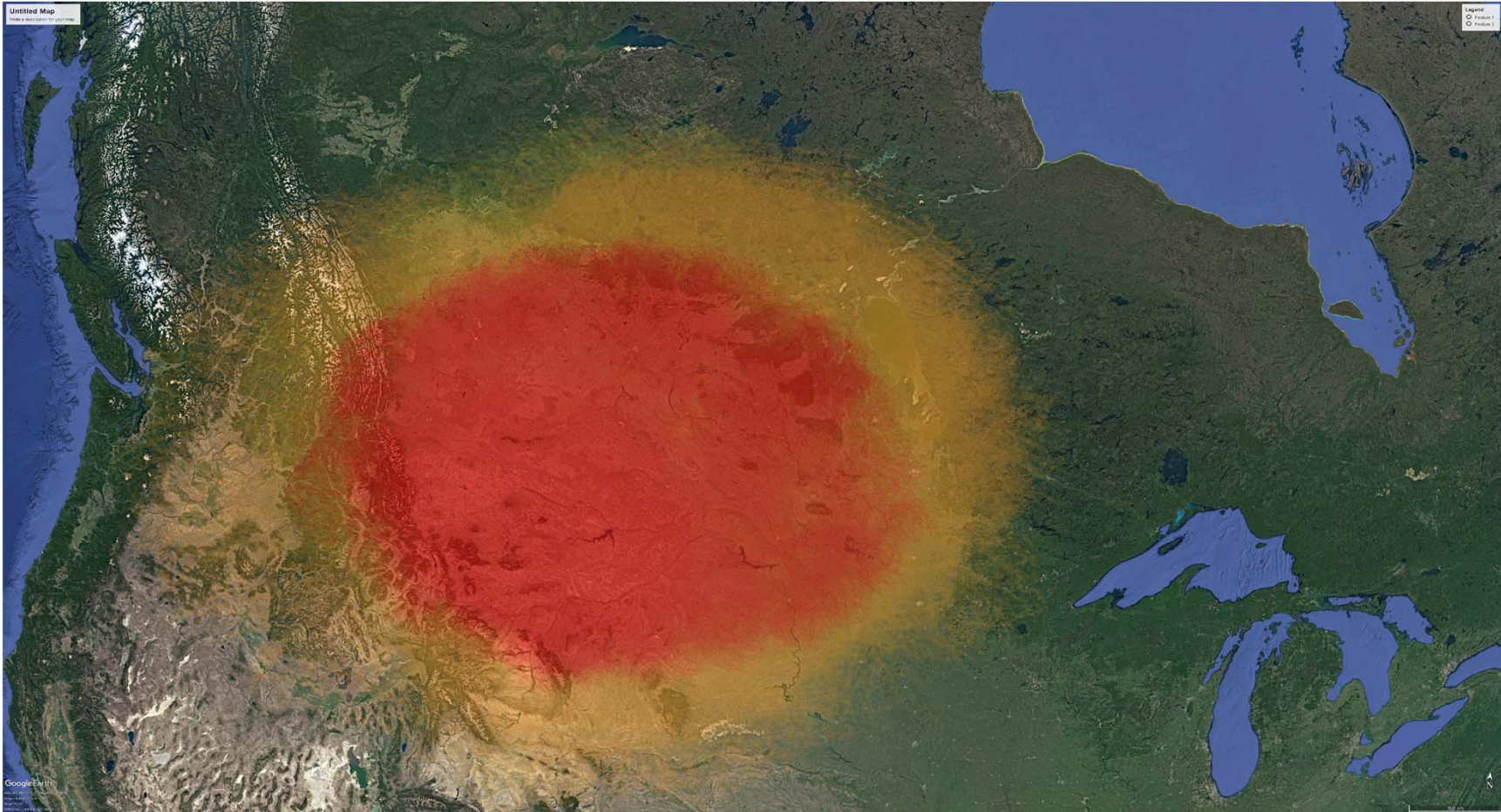
To fulfil our long-time commitment to the cultural continuity of Niitsitapi through poomaksin, intergenerational learning opportunities, collective decision-making



These two images demonstrate significant cultural continuity through time. Right image was taken in 1893 and left image was taken in 2007 (Source: SSRP TLU 2009)

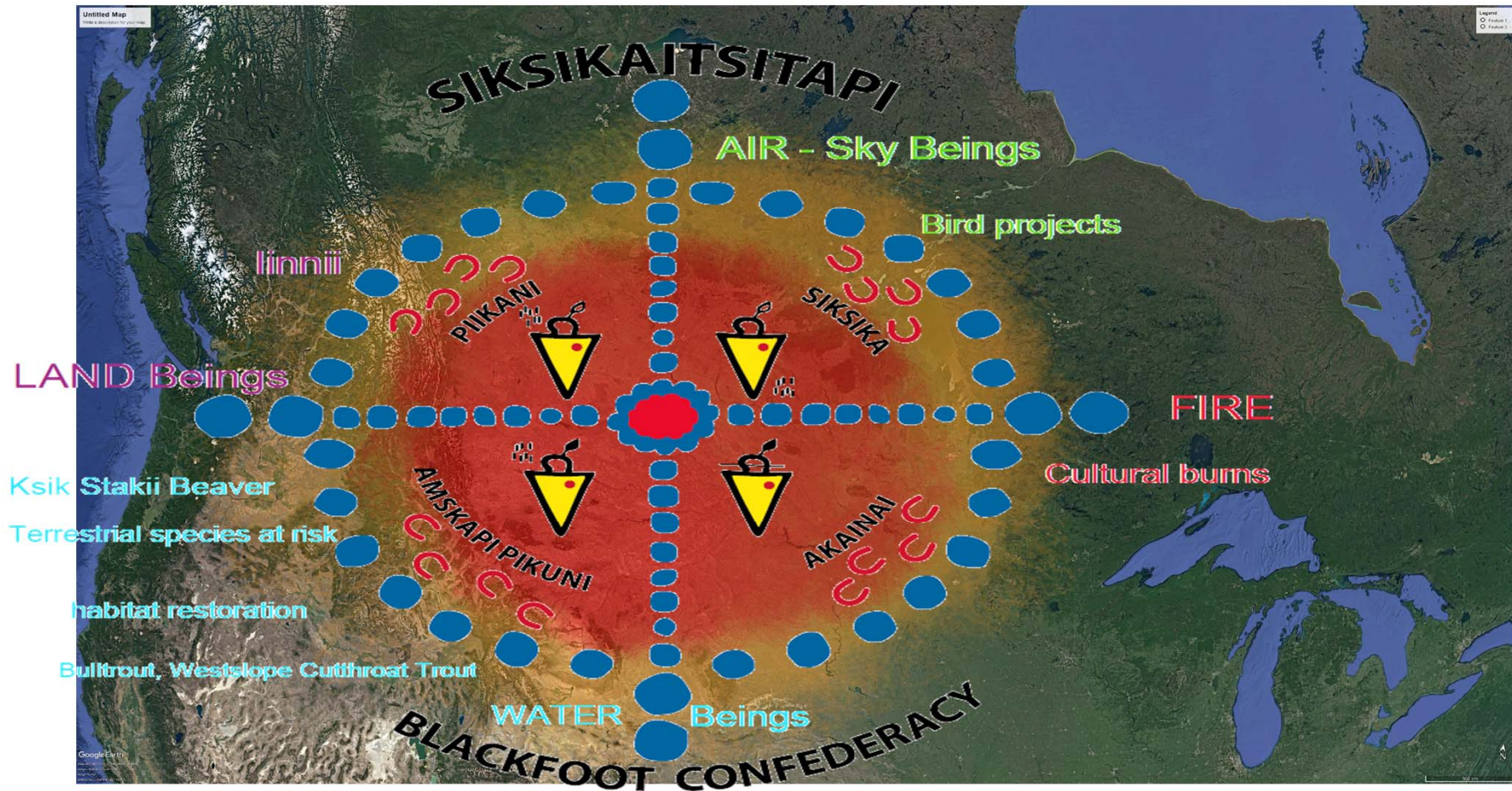


Draft Blackfoot Territory Map

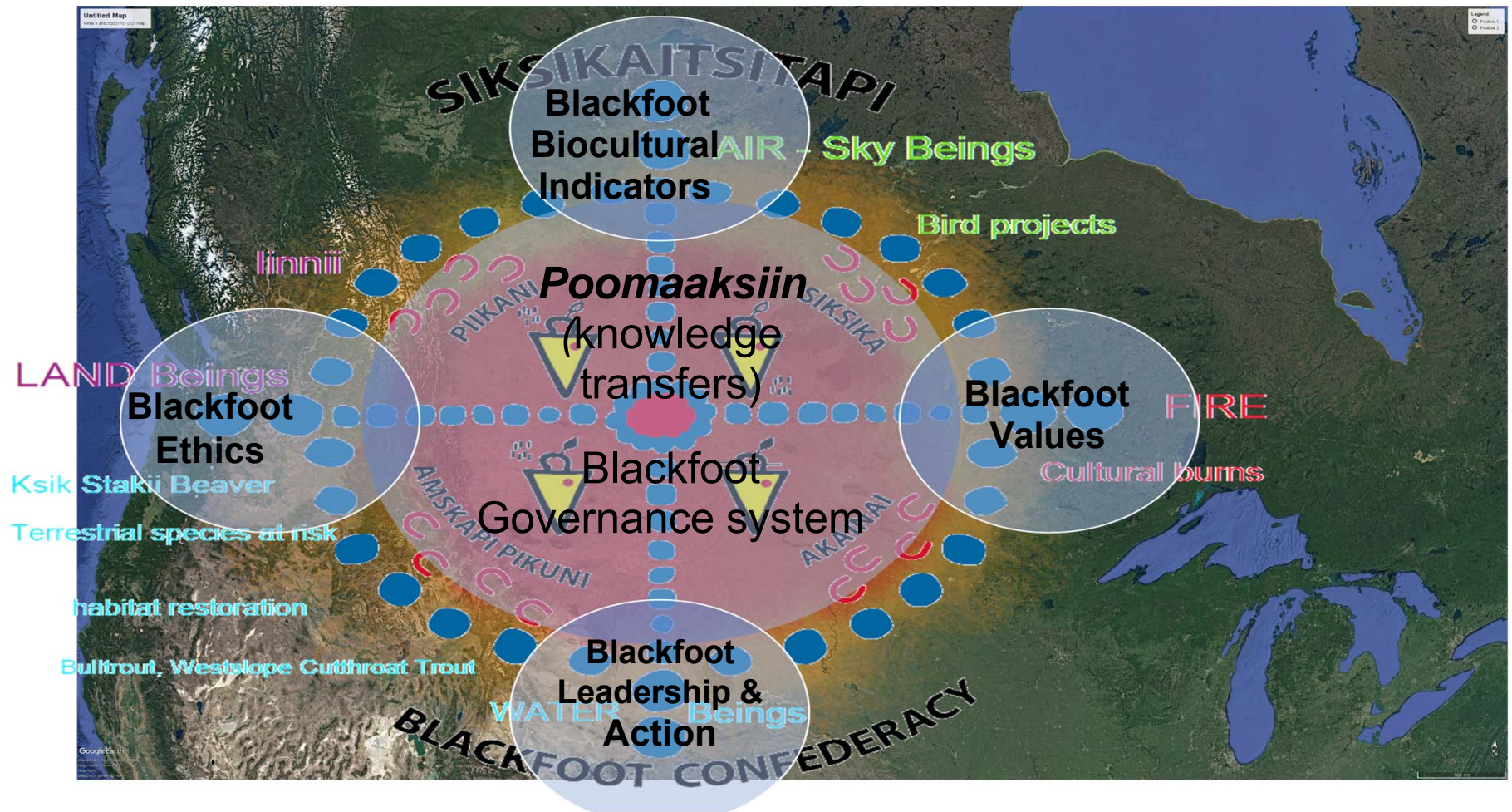


Draft Blackfoot Territory Map

Blackfoot Confederacy Guardianship Eastslopes



Blackfoot Confederacy Guardianship Eastslopes



Blackfoot Ethics:

- Spirituality and ceremony keep us in a state of harmony and balance
- Responsibilities to our relational alliances and our vow to the natural world
- Behavior and actions are understood as the embodiment of our spiritual responsibility to our relationships
- Respect and reciprocity
- Commitment to the continuity of Blackfoot culture
- Language connects us to Source of Life

Blackfoot Ethics**Leadership & Action:**

- Site meetings
- Storyboards
- Interviewing Elders
- Continuity
- Process for naming our territories based on our origin story.
- Leveraging technology
- Elevate individual responsibilities to be guardians of our way of life – we all have a responsibility to save our culture.

Blackfoot Biocultural Indicators**Blackfoot Biocultural Indicators:**

- Stories – Elevating our stories, consensus about what we share
- Knowledge transfers - Poomaskin is our process for keeping our way of life.
- Treaties with the animals
- Reviving Blackfoot pedagogies - societal education, ceremony, developing on the land curriculum, seasonal learning cycles, teaching to survive on our land.
- Access to the land and healing with the land.

Poomaskin
(knowledge transfers)**Blackfoot Governance system****Blackfoot Values****Blackfoot Values:**

- Nitsawatsiman – raising our children
- Mokaksin – a right to learn
- Kimmapiypitsim – kindness and compassion
- Tsiniksin – stories are our laws
- Ikinapi – doing thing gently and not rushing
- Atsimaop – balance in what we do
- Niksookoowaa - All my relations
- Atsimopii - we have a sense of the sacred
- Aah-ksin-ness-tsss-maah-tsee-yop - respect
- Iikakimaat – always trying hard
- eee-doo-miiist-dap-beyoka – working together
- akayokeetseeop - We wait for everyone

Blackfoot Leadership & Action

Goals

Year 1	Establish knowledge holder facilitator, community liaison, research teams; compile/present emerging research occurring in the focus study area; establish base-line of current practices within the communities; community engagement, inspire youth
Year 2	Blackfoot Biocultural Systems Framework – uniting the Blackfoot Nations through collaboration and consensus building; I) Blackfoot Knowledge transmission: place-based norms and narratives; II) Knowledge translation: icons based on Blackfoot syllabium and symbology; III) Knowledge production: Blackfoot Guardians toolkit – “designing for success”; and IV) Knowledge mobilization: communications and accreditation strategy, first annual Blackfoot Guardians Gathering – “Community Knowledge Sharing: Atapimskatoap
Year 3	Cumulative Effects Strategy – training and capacity development to identify indicators and scenarios based on research focus area with a view to watersheds throughout Niitsitapi traditional lands; Shifting the Narrative: working with watershed partners, develop guidance and best practices for Rocky Mountain East Slopes that incorporates the living knowledge of Blackfoot Culture through the consistent and effective hub activities as Blackfoot revitalize connection to East Slopes. Second annual Blackfoot Guardians Gathering – “TBD”
Year 4	Guardianship Hub expand beyond core research area to pilot areas through headwaters and select riparian ecosystems and sacred sites. Leverage the first 3 yrs of funding, extend & expand the Hub's activities throughout Niitsitapi traditional lands.



Year 3: March 31, 2023-March 31, 2024

- Cumulative Effects Training, with Blackfoot knowledge Holders, technicians and youth
- BFC Blackfoot Guardianship Database
- BFC Guardianship Toolkit
- BFC Guardianship funding to support on-going development and implementation



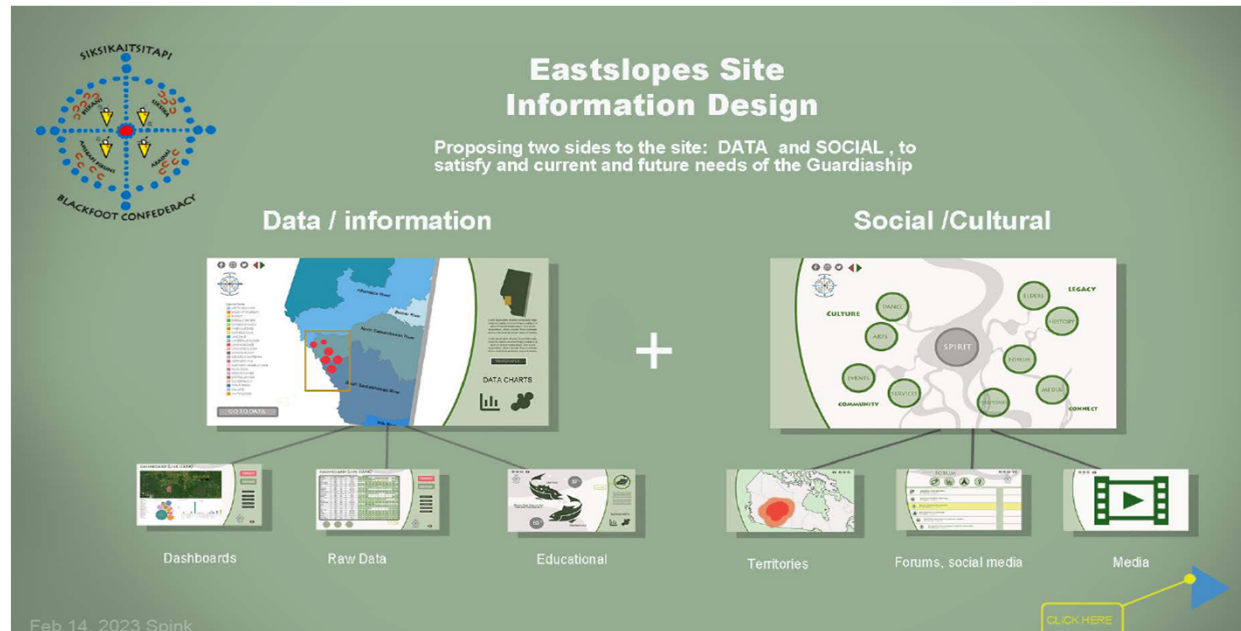
1. Cumulative Effects Management and Best Practices

Level 1: Training and Capacity Development

- May 15-18, 2023 @ Red Crow Community College, RCCC
- Coordinators, Technicians, Students/Researchers, Managers
- Level 1: 20 trainees, certificate of completion
- Accreditation programs (other)
- Potential wait-list (ensure 100% attendance of trainees)



2. BFC Guardianship Database



- Confederacy level collaboration and communication
- Aquatic Significant Species: e.g. Native Trout Project
- Impact Assessment
- Data Governance and Information Sovereignty



3. BFC Guardianship Toolkit



- Development of interactive interface to support multiple-users (e.g. youth, elders, teachers, technicians)
- Monitor and measure long term strategic targets
- Consistency



4. Transition: Year 3-year 4 (post-March 2024)

- Focus on needs, gaps and opportunities
- Enhance capacity and coordination for guardians working across jurisdictions
- Support existing initiatives



Thank you

- Questions for presenters
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