

## News Release

For Immediate Release

### Parks Canada and Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council launch Blackfoot Guardianship of the Eastern Slopes of the Rockies project

October 28, 2024

Waterton Lakes, Alberta

Parks Canada Agency

Parks Canada and the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council are pleased to launch the *Blackfoot Guardianship of the Eastern Slopes of the Rockies* project. This program will be Siksikaitapi-led, with support from Parks Canada staff in Waterton Lakes National Park (Paahtómahksikimi).

Since 2017, Guardians initiatives have supported Indigenous rights and responsibilities in protecting and conserving ecosystems, developing and maintaining sustainable economies, and continuing the profound connections between natural landscapes and Indigenous cultures. This program is the first of its kind in Southern Alberta. It will place dedicated Blackfoot Guardians on the ground to monitor, protect, and preserve sacred lands.

One area of focus will be Blackfoot biocultural indicator monitoring in the program area, including patrols along roadways and hiking trails. The Guardians will also monitor lands, waters, fire and air with attention to human activities that are harmful to the environment. Guardians will be operating along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in southwest Alberta, ranging from Waterton Lakes National Park in the south to the Livingstone Range area in the north. They will share stories of the land and culture with park visitors in addition to being a presence on the landscape.

The project area's lands and waters hold significant environmental and cultural value but face many challenges. Growth in land disturbance, increased frequency and intensity of floods, fires, and droughts, and dwindling populations of culturally significant species are some of the threats faced within the region. The Eastern Slopes Guardians program will combine Blackfoot traditional knowledge with western science to offer solutions to these issues.

## Quotes

"As stewards of these ancestral lands, the Blackfoot Confederacy takes great pride in this opportunity to ensure the continued health and vitality of our environment. This project is not only a commitment to preserving the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the Blackfoot territory but also a testament to the strength and resilience of the Blackfoot people. We look forward to a future where our lands thrive, protected by the watchful eyes of our guardians, for generations to come."

*Jack Royal, Chief Executive Officer  
Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council*

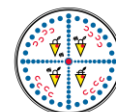
"Blackfoot Peoples have been stewards of the lands and waters in this region since time immemorial. The Blackfoot Confederacy Eastern Slopes Guardian program will offer solutions on climate change and biodiversity loss while safeguarding the natural spaces we all depend on. Parks Canada is pleased to support this initiative both in and around Waterton Lakes National Park."

*Ron Hallman, President and Chief Executive Officer  
Parks Canada Agency*

## Quick Facts



Parks Canada    Parcs Canada



**SIKSIKAITAPI  
BLACKFOOT  
CONFEDERACY**

- The Eastern Slopes Guardians program is administered by the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council, which includes Kainai, Piikani, Siksika and Amsskapipiikani nations, with support from Parks Canada Agency.
- The Blackfoot Confederacy since time immemorial have protected the vast landscape from beyond the Yellowstone River in the South, along the Rocky Mountains in the West, to the North Saskatchewan River in the North and well into present day Manitoba to the East.
- Successful Indigenous Guardians initiatives are now operating in over a quarter of First Nations across Canada. These types of Indigenous-led conservation initiatives integrate ecosystem health, community well-being, and economic sustainability, creating a more holistic and sustainable approach to conservation.
- In 2021, \$173 million was committed toward new and existing Indigenous-led Guardians initiatives by the Government of Canada. Parks Canada has received up to \$61.7 million of this to fund Indigenous Guardians programs at Parks Canada administered places.
- Indigenous partners and Parks Canada are working together across the country to enhance existing programs and co-create new initiatives within Parks Canada administered places that overlap Indigenous territories, treaty lands and ancestral homelands.
- Indigenous Peoples have long taken care of the land we all share. United Nations data suggests lands currently managed by Indigenous peoples make up around 20 per cent of the Earth's land mass yet contain as much as 80 per cent of the world's remaining biodiversity.
- Canada has committed to conserving 30 percent of its lands and waters by 2030.

## Related Links

- [Indigenous Guardians](#)
- [Parks Canada website](#)
- [Siksikaitsitapi Nations](#)
- [Canadian Mountain Network](#)

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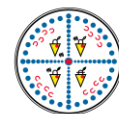
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