



# Oki Collective QUARTERLY

ISSUE #001-Q125

Q1.2025 ♦ BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY TRIBAL COUNCIL



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Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council presents the first edition of **OKI COLLECTIVE // QUARTERLY**. This publication provides a structured account of the Confederacy's governance, advocacy, cultural, and community updates. It also highlights the work done by a team of Blackfoot professionals dedicated to advancing the collective interests of Niitsitapi and all things Blackfoot.

This issue covers our Quarter 1 and early Quarter 2 (April to August 2025) and reports on several key developments. These include the signing of the first memorandum of understanding with the City of Calgary, the Confederacy Chiefs' May 1 statement rejecting Alberta Bill 54 and reaffirming Blackfoot Treaty sovereignty, and ongoing advocacy in Washington, DC with Alliance Nations to advance Jay Treaty rights and cross border mobility. It also notes the appointment of Kimmy Shade as Chief Executive Officer and the launch of the Blackfoot Confederacy Guardians of the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

**OKI COLLECTIVE** is intended to strengthen awareness of the scope of Confederacy activities, support clarity around decisions being taken, and provide members with reliable information on progress across governance, advocacy, and Blackfoot initiatives.

# KEY GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES



April 2025

## Blackfoot Confederacy Hosts Assembly of Treaty Chiefs Spring Sitting

The Blackfoot Confederacy successfully hosted the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs (AOTC) Spring Sitting on April 8 and 9, 2025, at the Westin Airport Hotel in Calgary, Alberta. The gathering brought together leadership from Treaty 6, Treaty 7 and Treaty 8 Nations to strengthen collaboration and address issues relating to Inherent and Treaty Rights, land management and the impacts of government decisions.

Building on the Unity Declaration of 2021, the assembly focused on reforms intended to improve equitable representation and strengthen communication between Nations. Chiefs emphasized the importance of ensuring that Treaty voices are represented in decision-making processes at all levels.

The agenda included updates on previous resolutions, review of the AOTC reform paper, and presentations from leaders such as Chief Ouray Crowfoot. Delegates also heard from representatives of the Jay Treaty Border Alliance and the G7 World Leadership Summit.

Deliberations reaffirmed the assembly's commitment to advancing Treaty Rights and positioning Treaty Nations to play a greater role in future engagements with federal and provincial governments.

The outcomes of the Spring Sitting were identified as important steps toward strengthening sovereignty and expanding the collective influence of the Treaty Nations.

May 2025

## Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs Reject Bill 54 and Reassert Blackfoot Treaty Sovereignty

On May 1, 2025, the Chiefs of the Siksikaitstapi—representing Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, and Aamskapi Piikani Nations—issued a unified statement rejecting Alberta's Bill 54 (the Citizen-Led Referendum Act) and affirming that provincial legislation cannot supersede their inherent sovereignty under Treaty and natural law.

Their statement emphasized that Treaty and inherent rights remain binding legal frameworks, rooted in agreements such as Treaty 7 (1877), Treaty 6 (1876), and Treaty 8 (1899), all of which were negotiated on a nation-to-nation basis and not intended to abdicate land or jurisdiction. Sovereignty, the Chiefs noted, predates Alberta's entry into Confederation and is grounded in Niitsitapi natural law and reinforced by the 1855 Lame Bull Treaty. nted in decision-making processes at all levels.



The Chiefs warned that provincial referendums, including those concerning separation, lack jurisdiction over entrenched treaty rights—rights which are protected under both domestic and international law. They called on Premier Danielle Smith to withdraw Bill 54 and instead prioritize treaty education, reconciliation, and the fulfillment of constitutional obligations.

Introduced on April 29, 2025, Bill 54 altered Alberta's citizen-initiated referendum process by reducing the threshold of signatures required—from 20% of all eligible voters to just 10% of votes cast in the previous election—and extending the collection period from 90 to 120 days. This change effectively makes it over 70% easier to launch a referendum, such as on independence.

While the government framed the bill as democratic reform, First Nations leaders have collectively denounced it as unconstitutional and a breach of treaty obligations.

Building on the Unity Declaration of 2021, the assembly focused on reforms intended to improve equitable representation and strengthen communication between Nations. Chiefs emphasized the importance of ensuring that Treaty voices are represented.

## Blackfoot Confederacy Statment from Chiefs May 01, 2025

May 2025

### Blackfoot Confederacy Signs Historic Agreement with the City of Calgary

On May 9, 2025, the Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy—Kainai, Piikani, Siksika and Amskapi Pikuni—took a historic step forward in Mohkinstsis by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Calgary. This agreement establishes a framework for direct communication, regular engagement and joint action on priorities that affect both the Confederacy and the City.

Chief Troy Knowlton of Piikani Nation, Chief Ouray Crowfoot of Siksika Nation, former Chief Roy Fox on behalf of Chief Travis Plaited Hair of Kainai Nation, and Pat Armstrong on behalf of Chairman Rodney Gervais of Amskapi Pikuni, signed on behalf of the Confederacy. Mayor Jyoti Gondek signed on behalf of the City. The signing opened with a Blackfoot pipe ceremony, affirming that this agreement is grounded in truth, respect and protocol.

The agreement is the first of its kind between the Blackfoot Nations and the City of Mohkinstsis. It acknowledges that Mohkinstsis exists within Blackfoot ancestral territory and affirms the Confederacy's role in decision-making about land, water, and community well-being. The MOU provides for collaboration on environmental stewardship, economic opportunity and cultural recognition, while advancing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at the municipal level.

For the Confederacy, the signing is both a recognition of history and a statement of sovereignty. Blackfoot leaders made clear that the relationship with Mohkinstsis is not new. It extends back to the origins of Fort Calgary and to the deep, unbroken connection of the Siksikaitsitapi to this land. What is new is the City's formal recognition of this relationship in a modern governance framework. This agreement was the result of years of work and trust-building.

The MOU was unanimously supported by Calgary's Intergovernmental Affairs Committee in March, and the May ceremony solidified an ongoing intergovernmental relationship on Blackfoot Land.



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#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY CHIEFS DENOUNCE BILL 54 AND AFFIRM BLACKFOOT TREATY SOVEREIGNTY

**Mohkinstsis (Calgary, AB), Blackfoot Territory - May 1, 2025** – We, the Chiefs of the Blackfoot Confederacy Nations—Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, and Amskapi Piikani—formally reject Alberta's Bill 54, the Citizen-led Referendum Act. This proposed legislation threatens the constitutional and legal order by disregarding the Nation-to-Crown agreements that define our relationship with the state. It undermines the authority of the Blackfoot Treaty, signed in 1877 at Blackfoot Crossing, which predates Alberta's entry into Confederation by nearly three decades.

The Blackfoot Treaty, like Treaties 6 (1876) and 8 (1899), was not a land surrender. It was a framework for peaceful coexistence and shared use of territory. These agreements, entered into in good faith by our ancestors, established a relationship based on mutual obligation and respect. They remain active, living instruments within Canada's constitutional architecture.

Understanding the original intent and spirit of these treaties is essential to any contemporary relationship between Indigenous Nations and the Crown. Educational efforts must prioritize the differing worldviews at the time of treaty-making, and reinforce that these covenants were never intended to be static. Alberta must commit to treaty education as a foundational part of reconciliation and governance. That need is more urgent than ever.

As Siksikaitsitapi, our inherent sovereignty precedes and transcends provincial boundaries. Our jurisdiction extends across what is now called Alberta and Montana—lands divided without our consent. The Lame Bull Treaty of 1855, along with the long-standing understanding of the Medicine Line, illustrates the recognition of Blackfoot sovereignty on both sides of this imposed border. No provincial initiative can redefine or erase our Nationhood.

Bill 54, by proposing a process for provincial referendums on constitutional matters—including potential separation—poses a direct challenge to existing treaty obligations and constitutional law. Treaty rights are not subject to popular vote, and cannot be reinterpreted or overridden by provincial legislation. We unequivocally reject any legislative mechanism that attempts to do so.

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## MOU Signing

Chief Troy Knowlton of Piikani Nation, Chief Ouray Crowfoot of Siksika Nation, former Chief Roy Fox on behalf of Chief Travis Plaited Hair of Kainai-Blood Tribe, and Pat Armstrong on behalf of Chairman Rodney Gervais of Amskapi Pikuni, with City of Calgary Mayor Joyti Gondek

## June 2025

### Blackfoot Confederacy Leaders Present at G7 Summit in Kananaskis

Siksikaitsitapi leadership and Elders were present at the 2025 G7 Summit held in Kananaskis and Miistuskoowa on June 12. Chief Ouray Crowfoot attended alongside Elders Apomahka Leonard Bastien, Herman Yellow Old Woman and Rod Scout. The conference site, partly owned by Siksika Nation through the Siksika Group of Companies, is located on Blackfoot Territory.

The summit opened with participation from Chiefs and Elders of the Blackfoot Confederacy and Treaty 6, 7 and 8, grounding the gathering of world leaders in ceremony and Indigenous protocol.

On the first day of the summit, Prime Minister Mark Carney was formally welcomed by Blackfoot Confederacy and Treaty 7 leadership. This included the Siksikaitsitapi Chiefs, Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council Interim Chief Executive Officer and Siksikaitsitapi Chiefs Society Director of Operations Carol Mason, along with representatives from the Treaty 7 Nations.

The Blackfoot Confederacy stated that the presence of its leadership at the summit reflected the governance of the Siksikaitsitapi, the Nation-to-Nation relationships that predate Confederation, and the importance of including First Nations perspectives in international dialogue.

## G7 Summit

Pictured: Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) representation including Chief Ouray Crowfoot with Elders Apomahka Leonard Bastien, Herman Yellow Old Woman, and Rod Scout standing proudly at the G7 Summit on June 12, 2025 in Kananaskis and Miistuskoowa.





June 2025

## Blackfoot Confederacy Advances Border Rights at Jay Treaty Meetings in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. – June 5, 2025 – The Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council participated in the Jay Treaty Border Alliance meetings in Washington, D.C., on June 3–4, 2025. The two-day fly-in brought together Tribal leaders and representatives from across Turtle Island to advance recognition of Jay Treaty rights and Indigenous cross-border mobility.

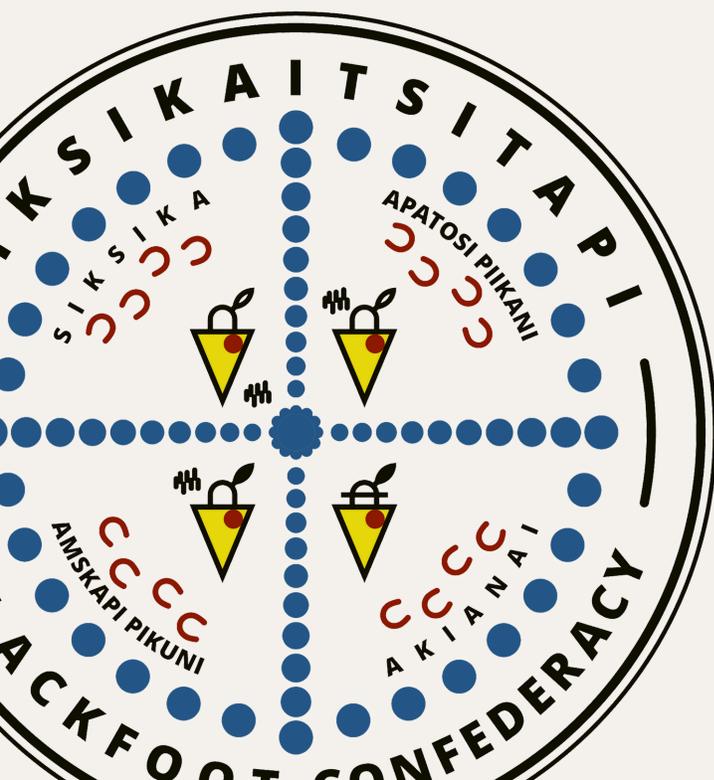
The Confederacy was represented by now Chief Executive Officer Kimmy Shade and Communications Manager Theoren Royal. Delegates raised key concerns with U.S. lawmakers and federal agencies, including the continued enforcement of the 50 percent blood quantum rule, the lack of recognition of Confederacy-issued Tribal identification, and the racial profiling and secondary screening of Elders.

Meetings were held with staff from the U.S. Senate and House Judiciary Committees, the Department of Homeland Security, and congressional representatives. Confederacy delegates underscored that Siksikaitstapi mobility rights predate the establishment of the Canada–United States border and must be respected under existing treaty obligations.

The Confederacy’s participation in Washington builds on a series of initiatives to advance border rights, including the collection of survey data documenting community experiences of harassment and delays, engagement with legal experts, and advocacy at international forums. Confederacy leadership emphasized that sustained participation in the Jay Treaty Border Alliance is part of a broader strategy to secure recognition and implementation of Indigenous cross-border rights.

*Pictured: From Left to Right: Director Kimmy Shade , Attorney General William Barquin, Policy Advisor Naomie Droll, Chairman Michael Dolson, Chairwoman Jennifer Porter, Grand Chief Cody Diabo, Tribal Attorney Danna Jackson, Legislative Assistant Isabella Warren. Photo by Theoren Royal*

*Kimmy Shade with Alyssa LaTray, Legislative Assistant to Congresswoman Emily Randall and Amskapi Pikuni descendant*



July 2025

## Blackfoot Confederacy Criticizes Alberta’s Position on First Nations Clean Water Act

Mohkínstsis, July 04 2025 — The Blackfoot Confederacy has issued a response to the Government of Alberta following a statement from Environment Minister Rebecca Schulz opposing the reintroduction of federal legislation known as Bill C61, the First Nations Clean Water Act.

May 14 Minister Schulz released a press statement calling for the federal government to eliminate what she described as federal policies and legislation that undermine competitiveness and delay project development. The release specifically urged Ottawa not to proceed with reintroducing Bill C61.

Leaders from the Kainai, Siksika and Piikani Nations said the Clean Water Act does not create barriers to economic competitiveness or project approvals. They stated that the Act would affirm the human right to safe drinking water, the right to sufficient water supplies, and the right of First Nations to govern water on reserve lands.

The Confederacy said Alberta's opposition disregards the health and safety of First Nations citizens and is inconsistent with reconciliation. Leadership noted that the Prime Minister has committed in the federal throne speech to partnership with Indigenous Peoples and to advancing reconciliation. They said that failing to reintroduce Bill C61 would amount to a denial of First Nations' human rights and a breach of Canada's stated commitments.

The Blackfoot Confederacy called on the federal government to reintroduce the First Nations Clean Water Act and to confirm that access to safe drinking water for First Nations is a recognized right.



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**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 4, 2025

***Blackfoot Confederacy Condemns the Government of Alberta's  
Opposition to First Nations' Right to Safe Drinking Water***

CALGARY, AB - Yesterday Alberta's Minister of Environment, Rebecca Schulz, issued a press release calling on the federal government to scrap "all federal policies and legislation that undermine competitiveness, delay project development..." Alberta's press release specifically insisted that Canada not reintroduce Bill C-61 – the *First Nations Clean Water Act*. Kainai, Siksika, and Piikani Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy are outraged at the Government of Alberta's morally bankrupt opposition to the rights of First Nations to access safe and sufficient water supplies.

The *First Nations Clean Water Act* poses absolutely no barriers to competitiveness or development. In fact, the Act would confirm the human right of First Nations to safe drinking water, a right to sufficient water supplies, and a right to govern water on reserve lands. The Government of Alberta's motives are unknown, but what is not in doubt is that Premier Smith's government opposes First Nations' rights to safe and sufficient water supplies – which is utterly reprehensible.

The Blackfoot Nations remind the Prime Minister of his commitment in the throne speech: "The Government will be a reliable partner to Indigenous Peoples, upholding its fundamental commitment to advancing reconciliation." Failing to reintroduce the *First Nations Clean Water Act* would be a profound and intentional act against the human rights of First Nations and fundamentally inconsistent with the Prime Minister's stated commitment to reconciliation. We call on the Prime Minister to confirm that the *First Nations Clean Water Act* will be reintroduced as soon as possible.

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## Blackfoot Confederacy Statement from July 04, 2025

May 2025

### Statement from Chief Troy Knowlton in Response to Premier Smith's May 13 Letter

Mohkinstsis, May 15, 2025 — Chief Troy Knowlton, on behalf of the Blackfoot Confederacy, issued a formal response to Premier Danielle Smith's letter dated May 13, 2025. The statement outlined concerns regarding the accuracy of the Premier's remarks and their implications for Treaty rights and Crown-Indigenous relations.

Chief Knowlton emphasized the distinction between misinformation, defined as error, and disinformation, defined as the deliberate use of falsehoods. He stated that conflating the two undermines public understanding of Treaty 7 (1877) and weakens confidence in the framework that governs relations between Alberta and First Nations.

The statement rejected the Premier's proposal to bring a select group of Treaty Chiefs to Ottawa, describing the initiative as divisive and without benefit to Blackfoot citizens. Chiefs Ouray Crowfoot of Siksika Nation and Travis Plaited Hair of Kainai Nation concurred that participation in such a trip would fragment Treaty solidarity. On that basis, the Blackfoot Confederacy confirmed it will not participate.

Chief Knowlton also addressed Bill 54, the Citizen Led Referendum Act. The Confederacy stated that the legislation risks undermining the constitutional principle of Treaty supremacy by subjecting Treaty obligations to public vote. It further noted that such measures could create policy instability, discourage investment, and signal a retreat from Alberta's constitutional and fiduciary responsibilities toward First Nations.

The Confederacy clarified that it does not recognize the title of "Grand Chief." Authority rests equally with the Chiefs of Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani Nations, and government correspondence must be addressed to all three leaders. The statement concluded by urging Albertans, particularly policymakers, academics, and media, to ground future dialogue in primary Treaty documents and verified research. The Confederacy reaffirmed its commitment to advancing full Treaty implementation and to exercising Blackfoot sovereignty through collective leadership.



## Blackfoot Confederacy Hosts Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Symposium in Mohkinstsis

The Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council hosted the 2025 Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (IELCC) Symposium on May 22 and 23 at the Deerfoot Inn and Casino in Mohkinstsis. The two-day event brought together Elders, educators, knowledge keepers, policymakers and community advocates for discussions on Indigenous-led approaches to early childhood education and childcare.

The symposium opened with remarks from the Chiefs of the Blackfoot Confederacy and Interim Tribal Council CEO Carol Mason. Natoyi'sokasiim Lowa Beebe served as Master of Ceremonies.

Keynote presentations featured Otahksikinakim Wilton Good Striker, Mariah Gladstone of Indigikitchen, Dr. Deborah Pace, Miranda Bernard, and Dr. Gabrielle Weasel Head. Topics included kinship networks, child development, community resilience, food sovereignty and Indigenous governance.

A Kaahsinnooniks Think Tank convened knowledge holders from Siksika, Kainai, Piikani and Amskapi Piikuni to examine how Blackfoot history can inform solutions to contemporary and future challenges. National policy panels included representatives from the Assembly of First Nations, Employment and Social Development Canada, Indigenous Services Canada and other organizations involved in childcare policy.

Community engagement was a central focus. Programming included a youth talent showcase, an evening reception and networking sessions. The event highlighted the theme *liyotkanonttaam Awaapiswa Kokosinnooniks*, meaning "Our Children Are Precious."

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council extended thanks to speakers, Elders, staff, committee members, and volunteers who contributed to the event, with recognition given to Shirley Crop Eared Wolf, Dr. Genevieve Fox and the IELCC team. Partners included Employment and Social Development Canada, the IELCC Secretariat, Indigenous Services Canada and the Assembly of First Nations.

The Confederacy noted that the symposium reflected the ongoing commitment of the Siksikaitsitapi Nations — Kainai, Piikani, Siksika and Amskapi Piikuni — to strengthen early learning systems rooted in Blackfoot values and cultural protocols.

Planning is underway for the 2026 IELCC Symposium, scheduled again for May in Mohkinstsis.





## 2025 GUARDIANS

- Crystal Lee Melting Tallow (Siksika Nation)  
B.Sc. Geography – Vancouver Island University
- Joey Beebe (Piikani Nation)  
B.A. International Indigenous Studies – University of Calgary, Future educator
- Cody Small Legs (Piikani Nation)  
B.Mgt. Indigenous Governance – Dhillon School of Business, University of Lethbridge

**June 2025**

### Blackfoot Confederacy Launched Guardianship Program for Eastern Slopes

The Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council, in partnership with Parks Canada, launched the Blackfoot Guardianship of the Eastern Slopes of the Rockies project earlier this year. The initiative, the first of its kind in southern Alberta, placed Blackfoot Guardians in the field to monitor and protect lands from Waterton Lakes National Park to the Livingstone Range.

The program was led by the Blackfoot Confederacy with support from Parks Canada staff at Paahtómahksikimi, also known as Waterton Lakes National Park. Oversight of the project was provided by Justin Bruised Head, Blackfoot Guardianship Coordinator, and CEO Kimmy Shade, former Director of Environment, Lands and Economic Development with the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council.

Guardians combined traditional Blackfoot knowledge with western science to address biodiversity loss, climate change and the impacts of human activity on sensitive ecosystems. Their work included environmental monitoring, the protection of culturally significant species and the sharing of Blackfoot stories and cultural knowledge with park visitors.

The 2025 cohort of Guardians introduced at the launch included:

- Crystal Lee Melting Tallow (Siksika Nation), Bachelor of Science in Geography, Vancouver Island University
- Joey Beebe (Piikani Nation), Bachelor of Arts in International Indigenous Studies, University of Calgary, future educator
- Cody Small Legs (Piikani Nation), Bachelor of Management in Indigenous Governance, Dhillon School of Business, University of Lethbridge

Throughout the season, Crystal Lee, Joey and Cody worked with Project Coordinator Justin Bruised Head to support ecosystem protection, strengthen Blackfoot land-based knowledge and welcome visitors to Paahtómahksikimi.

The partnership with Parks Canada marked a new stage of collaboration in environmental stewardship and reflected the Blackfoot Confederacy's role in safeguarding the Eastern Slopes.



April 2025

## Blackfoot Confederacy Education Director Joins International Women's Day Leadership Panel

The University of Lethbridge hosted its 2025 International Women's Day Leadership Conference under the theme "Leaders Who Change the Conversation in health, science, athletics, manufacturing, education and arts." The conference focused on creating spaces for dialogue across a range of professional fields

Staahtsistayaaki Dr. Genevieve A. Fox, Education Director of the Siksikaitsitapi Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council and a member of the Kainai Blood Tribe, was featured as one of the panelists. Dr. Fox has worked extensively in K to 12 education, post secondary institutions and curriculum development, with an emphasis on advancing education for Niitsitapi learners.

She was joined on the panel by Canadian basketball Olympians Kacie Bosch and Paige Crozon, Su Ying Strang, Executive Director of the Maansiksikaitsitapiitsinikssin Southern Alberta Art Gallery, and Simarjit Bains, Vice President of Manufacturing at Triple M Housing.

The University of Lethbridge said the conference theme reflects an effort to broaden leadership representation and create spaces where different perspectives can inform future directions. Dr. Fox contributed insights on Indigenous education and the role of Blackfoot knowledge within education systems.

Her participation placed Blackfoot Confederacy leadership alongside other voices in a national forum on education, leadership and professional achievement.

May 2025

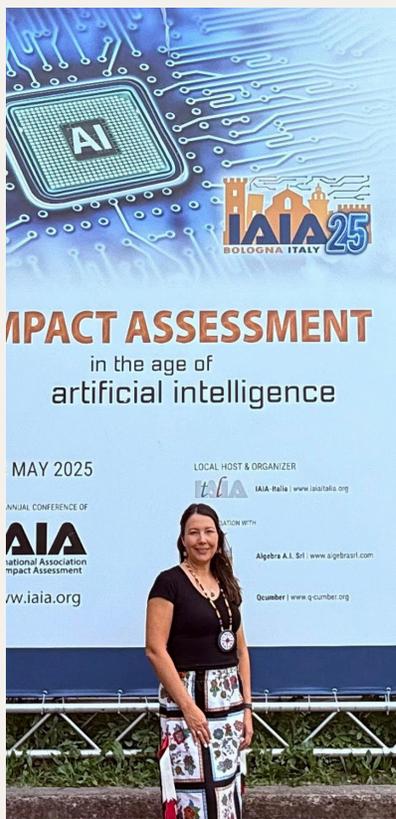
## Blackfoot Confederacy Presents at International Impact Assessment Conference in Italy

On May 3, 2025, Akai'kamotaaki Kimmy Shade presented on behalf of the Blackfoot Confederacy at IAIA25: Impact Assessment in the Age of Artificial Intelligence, the 44th Annual Conference of the International Association for Impact Assessment, held in Bologna, Italy.

Shade delivered a presentation titled Kitawahsinnonni – Our Land Blackfoot Guardianship. The presentation outlined how Blackfoot guardians combine Niitsitapi ancestral law with contemporary scientific methodologies, artificial intelligence, and governance practices aligned with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The focus was on addressing cumulative environmental impacts through systems that draw from both traditional knowledge and modern science.

The presentation emphasized the Blackfoot Confederacy's commitment to Kitawahsinnonni, or Our Land, and the importance of sustainable governance for the protection of Blackfoot lands and waters.

Shade highlighted the role of Indigenous-led approaches in international environmental forums and positioned Blackfoot leadership as a contributor to global stewardship practices in the context of technological change.



May 2025

## Grand Opening of Blackfoot Exhibit at The Confluence

On May 17, 2025, The Confluence in Calgary (formerly Fort Calgary) opened a new permanent exhibit titled Kipaitápiiyssinnooni (Our Way of Life). The exhibit celebrates Blackfoot life, culture, and connection to the land, with the grand opening held at 1 p.m.

More than 50 Blackfoot Elders, knowledge keepers, and artists contributed to the project, which combines contemporary art with traditional forms. The 900-square-foot exhibit space is modeled after a traditional lodge and features Blackfoot language, stories, and artistic traditions.

"This exhibit reflects our way of life," said curator and Niitsitapi artist Star Crop Eared Wolf of Kainai Nation. "My hope is that we make our ancestors proud and that this space inspires future generations to carry our culture forward."

Kipaitápiiyssinnooni is the first major addition to The Confluence in 25 years. It follows the organization's 2024 rebranding, which included adopting the Blackfoot name l'táámito'taattsiyio'pi (Harmonious Meeting Place), gifted by Elder Leonard Bastien Weasel Traveller.

The Blackfoot Confederacy acknowledged The Confluence and its staff for their role in presenting the history of Mohkíntsis (Calgary) and advancing Blackfoot heritage within the city. Special recognition was given to Star Crop Eared Wolf for her leadership in developing and curating the exhibit.

The public is encouraged to visit Kipaitápiiyssinnooni at l'táámito'taattsiyio'pi to experience Blackfoot history and culture presented by Blackfoot people.

For more information, visit [theconfluence.ca](http://theconfluence.ca)



## Star Crop Eared Wolf

Special recognition was given to Star Crop Eared Wolf for her leadership in developing and curating the exhibit on May 17, 2025.

## Exhibit Opening

Over 50 Blackfoot elders, knowledge keepers, and artists contributed to the exhibit, blending contemporary art with traditional practices.

The Blackfoot Confederacy extends its gratitude to The Confluence and its staff for their commitment to sharing the true story of Mohkíntsis (Calgary) and honouring Blackfoot heritage.





## Exhibit Opening

May 18, 2025

### June 2025

## Destination Blackfoot Campaign Launches in Mohkinstsis

Images promoting the Destination Blackfoot campaign appeared throughout Mohkinstsis during the summer of 2025. The campaign, led by the Blackfoot Confederacy, highlights tourism operators, artists and entrepreneurs from the four Blackfoot Nations: Kainai, Piikani, Siksika and Amskapi Piikani.

The initiative invites the public to explore authentic cultural experiences across Blackfoot Territory and was timed to coincide with the busiest summer months, including the Calgary Stampede and the G7 Summit hosted in Alberta.

The campaign is intended to connect residents and visitors with opportunities to engage directly with Blackfoot businesses and cultural experiences.

More information about Destination Blackfoot and links to featured operators are available at [www.blackfootconfederacy.ca](http://www.blackfootconfederacy.ca).

## Summer 2025 Campaign





July 2025



## Blackfoot Confederacy Hosts Annual Stampede BBQ in Mohkinstsis

The Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council hosted its 2025 Stampede BBQ on July 9 in Mohkinstsis. The event brought together community members, leadership, staff, volunteers and guests to mark the beginning of summer activities for the Confederacy.

Entertainment was provided by Double Rider from Siksika Nation, with emcee duties led by Lowa Beebe. The program featured live music, community engagement and opportunities to connect with members from across the Confederacy.

The Stampede BBQ has become an annual tradition for the Blackfoot Confederacy, serving as both a cultural gathering and a community event during the Calgary Stampede.



July 2025

## Blackfoot Confederacy Recognizes Christina Ortiz Bruised Head, Scholarship Recipient

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council extends congratulations to Christina Ortiz Bruised Head of the Kainai – Blood Tribe, recipient of the 2025 Blackfoot Confederacy Education Scholarship. Christina is pictured with Dr. Genevieve Fox, Education Director for the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council.

Christina recently graduated from Catholic Central High School in Lethbridge, Alberta, and has been accepted into the Criminal Justice program at Lethbridge Polytechnic. Her academic and athletic accomplishments reflect a strong commitment to future leadership and professional development.

In addition to her post-secondary pursuits, Christina has been selected to participate as an Ambassador of the USA at the 2025 Portugal Basketball Festival, which will take place in Portugal and Spain in June 2025.

The Blackfoot Confederacy commends Christina for her achievements and acknowledges the continued efforts of Blackfoot students who are advancing in both academic and athletic arenas.



## Blackfoot Confederacy Present at Akokatsin

The Blackfoot Confederacy tipi was camped at Akokatsin in 2025 on Kainai Blood Tribe territory. The gathering drew leadership, elders and community members from the four Nations of the Confederacy, continuing a long tradition of unity at significant cultural events.

### August 2025

## 4th Annual Siksikaitsitapi Pow Wow Held During Whoop-Up Days in Sikookotoki

The 2025 Siksikaitsitapi Pow Wow took place August 20–21 at the Agri-Food Hub and Trade Centre in Sikóóhktok. The event ran as part of Whoop-Up Days, with gates free until 3 p.m. on August 19–21, according to organizers. Global News reported the pow wow marked its fourth year as a partnership between the Blackfoot Confederacy and Lethbridge & District Exhibition, with opening-day programming on August 20.

This year's Siksikaitsitapi Princess Pageant drew a record 22 contestants. Winners were named in three categories: Tiny Tot, Toka'sa Daniels; Junior, Aubree Daniels; and Senior, Emma Mountain Horse. Crowning took place at the pow wow.

Expanded Indigenous programming accompanied the pow wow. Westwind Weekly detailed the Indigenous Marketplace (Aug. 19–21, noon to 11 p.m.) organized by Sinopaa Community Services; the Siksikaitsitapi Music Showcase headlined by Armond Duck Chief (Aug. 19); a full evening on the Original 16 Stage presented by the Blackfoot Confederacy and PCL Construction (Aug. 21) featuring Bebe Buckskin, Willy Big Bull and Winter Count, and the BFC All-Star Band; and nightly Relay Races during the Lethbridge & District Pro Rodeo (Aug. 21–23).

## 2025–2026 Siksikaitsitapi Royalty

A highlight of the weekend was the Siksikaitsitapi Princess Pageant, which drew a record 22 contestants.

Three new titleholders were crowned at the pow wow: Tiny Tot Princess Toka'sa Daniels, Junior Princess Aubree Daniels, and Senior Princess Emma Mountain Horse.



# LEADERSHIP TRANSITION, NEW TEAM MEMBERS



June 2025

## Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council Appoints New Chief Executive Office

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council is pleased to announce the appointment of Kimmy Shade (Akai'kamotaaki – Survives Many Perils) as Chief Executive Officer effective July 28, 2025. This appointment reflects the Council's continued commitment to strong executive leadership, Nation-led governance, and strategic advancement for Blackfoot Confederacy.

Ms. Shade is a member of the Kainai-Blood Tribe and brings more than 25 years of experience in Indigenous governance, environmental leadership, economic development, and intergovernmental affairs. Since joining the Confederacy in 2018 as Director of Environment and Economic Development, she has led key initiatives that continue to build institutional capacity and position the Blackfoot Confederacy as a leader in Nation-based innovation and implementation.

Her leadership has contributed to the establishment of the Blackfoot Guardianship Rocky Mountain East Slopes Project, which received a leadership award in 2023 for its integration of Blackfoot knowledge and Western science for land protection. She also led the development of Destination Blackfoot, which was recognized by Indigenous Tourism Alberta in 2024 for excellence in Indigenous-led tourism, and founded the Blackfoot Entrepreneur Business Network to support economic growth for Siksikaitstapi entrepreneurs.

Ms. Shade has also served in several governance and advisory roles. She was a member of the Blood Tribe Police Commission from 2019 to 2023, supporting community safety and oversight. From 2013 to 2015, she served on the Alberta First Nations Women's Council on Economic Security, advising government on policies related to land, justice, environment, and economic inclusion. She currently sits on the Premier's Council on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2 Spirited plus People, supporting legislative and policy reform to improve safety outcomes in Alberta.

In June 2025, she represented the Blackfoot Confederacy at the Jay Treaty Border Alliance meetings in Washington, DC, engaging with U.S. federal departments and members of Congress to advance cross-border Indigenous rights.

She holds a Bachelor of Management from the University of Lethbridge and has held senior positions within the Government of Alberta and the Blood Tribe Housing Authority. She is recognized for her ability to unite diverse stakeholders through a collaborative approach and a commitment to advancing Blackfoot interests.

"I am honoured and excited to serve our Blackfoot People," said Kimmy Shade. "We are at a pivotal moment for the Blackfoot Confederacy. Our Nations are building strength in every sector. I look forward to working alongside our leadership, staff, and Blackfoot Communities to advance our shared vision and ensure we continue moving forward together with purpose."

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council also formally acknowledges Mrs. Carol Mason for her leadership and service as Interim Chief Executive Officer. Mrs. Mason will return to her role as Director of Operations for the Blackfoot Chiefs Society, where she will continue to support executive coordination, advocacy, and high-level operational oversight in alignment with Blackfoot priorities.

August 2025

## Cassie Ayoungman joins Blackfoot Confederacy as Destination Blackfoot Promotion Coordinator

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council is proud to announce the appointment of Cassie Ayoungman as Destination Blackfoot Promotion Coordinator. Cassie is a member of Siksika Nation and has been one of the featured operators within Destination Blackfoot through her organization Soul Of Miistaki, an Indigenous led initiative that shares land-based experiences rooted in Blackfoot knowledge.

Cassie is a proud Siksika'ki (Blackfoot woman) raised on Siksika Nation Alberta. Basketball was a big part of her upbringing and remains close to her heart. She later participated in the Indigenous military Bold Eagle program before discovering mountain sports in her mid twenties. Cassie quickly recognized the lack of diversity in outdoor spaces and was inspired to create Soul of Miistaki, a not for profit that brings people together through hiking climbing biking and skiing while incorporating Indigenous cultural practices and teachings.

Climbing has been both a teacher and healer for Cassie offering lessons in resilience and personal growth. She continues to give back to her Nation as a practicing paramedic and through her work as an Arc'teryx Alberta Ambassador, advancing representation and awareness for Indigenous presence in outdoor communities.

In her new role with Destination Blackfoot Cassie will help elevate operators across the Confederacy, strengthen partnerships, and showcase the growing network of tourism experiences rooted in Siksikaitsitapi culture. Her leadership will ensure that the promotion of Blackfoot tourism remains guided by community values and continues to benefit our Nations.

We are excited to welcome Cassie to this new position. Look out for updates on Destination Blackfoot in the coming weeks, including operator spotlights, new visitor resources, and Confederacy wide initiatives that will highlight our people and our lands.



## Soul of Mistaki

Soul of Miistaki is an Indigenous-led nonprofit founded by a Cassie Ayoungman that offers inclusive outdoor programs on Blackfoot lands to foster healing, connection, and growth through Indigenous teachings, movement, and community.



## COMMUNICATIONS & CONFEDERACY HIGHLIGHTS

The Confederacy's Communications, led by Theoren Royal, continues to ensure transparent messaging, timely updates, and culturally strong communications. The office supports public relations, coordinates with media outlets, and produces materials that reflect Blackfoot priorities.

May 2025

### New Logo Unveiled for Blackfoot Confederacy Guardians of the Eastern Slopes

The Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council has introduced the official logo for the Siksikaitsitapi Guardians of the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains. The design was created by Rudy Black Plume of the Kainai-Blood Tribe.

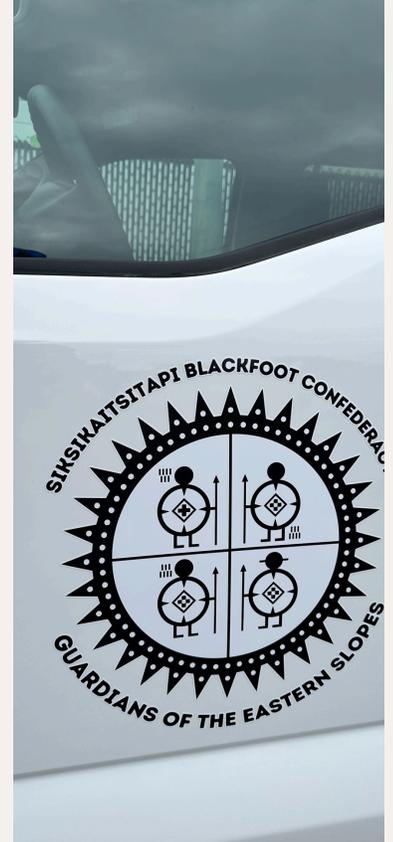
The logo reflects the role of Niitsitapiiksi in caring for and protecting the Prairie and Rocky Mountain ecosystems. For generations, Blackfoot people have applied cultural knowledge to maintain balance on the land through fire stewardship, water management, sustainable harvesting, rotational farming, agroforestry, and the preservation of sacred sites. Key design elements include:

Triangles – Representing the Rocky Mountains, drawn from Blackfoot painted lodge designs tied to teachings about honouring and protecting children, underscoring stewardship for future generations.

Four Shielded Warriors – Inspired by pictographs from Aisinapi (Writing-on-Stone), each figure represents one of the four Blackfoot Nations and the shared responsibility to protect prairie and mountain environments.

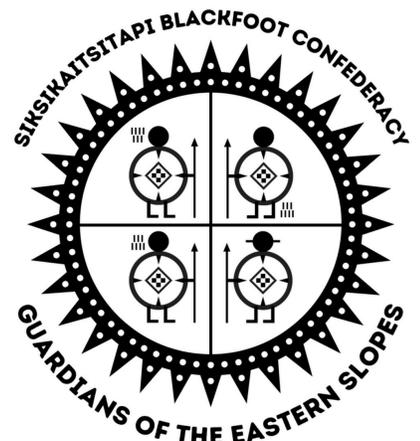
Whirlpool Shield Design – Highlighting the importance of safeguarding the Eastern Slopes watershed.

The emblem affirms the Blackfoot Confederacy's responsibility and authority in protecting these lands and waters.



### New Logo

The new logo for the Siksikaitsitapi Blackfoot Confederacy Guardians of the Eastern Slopes features a whirlpool shield design that symbolizes the Guardians' responsibility and authority to protect lands and waters, especially the Eastern Slopes watershed.





## Blackfoot Confederacy Welcomes the Kahnawake Hunters to Mohkínstsis - Featuring Kainai's Own Zane Chief Moon

The Blackfoot Confederacy was honoured to welcome the Kahnawake Hunters players, coaches, staff, and families from Kahnawà:ke and the Mohawk Nation to Mohkínstsis (Calgary) for the 2025 Founders Cup.

The national Junior "B" box lacrosse championship was held August 18–24, 2025, at the Seven Chiefs Sportsplex & Chief Jim Starlight Centre on Tsuut'ina Nation. The tournament brought together the best teams from across the country, with lacrosse continuing to stand as a living expression of Indigenous strength and community.

The Hunters made history by capturing the championship title on August 24. This victory carried special meaning for the Blackfoot Confederacy, as Zane Chief Moon of the Kainai–Blood Tribe competed with the Hunters' roster. Zane, a past RMLL Rookie of the Year (2019) and 2023 scoring leader, added to his lacrosse legacy on the national stage.

Beyond sport, the Hunters' presence in Mohkínstsis strengthened ties between our Nations. Both the Blackfoot Confederacy and Kahnawà:ke are members of the Jay Treaty Border Alliance, standing together to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples to freely cross the Medicine Line. In May 2024, the Confederacy attended the Iroquois Caucus General Assembly hosted by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke, building on this shared commitment.

The Blackfoot Confederacy celebrates the Hunters' championship win and the enduring connections between our peoples that were honoured throughout the 2025 Founders Cup.



**May 2025**

## Arc'teryx Film Features Blackfoot Climber Cassie Ayoungman

Arc'teryx premiered a new short film, *likaiksimatsa'pao'p* (Grateful to Be on the Land), on May 15, 2025, in Banff. The film features Cassie Ayoungman of Siksika Nation, founder of Soul of Miistaki and now part of the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council team. Directed by Trevor Solway of Siksika Nation, the production shares Cassie's journey of climbing, healing, and land-based learning.

Her work has focused on making climbing accessible to Indigenous participants and creating cultural programming that connects people to the land. Cassie was also featured in the Destination Blackfoot campaign for her leadership as both a cultural and athletic trailblazer.

## OUR TEAM (SEPTEMBER 2025)

### **Executive Management:**

- Kimmy Shade, Chief Executive Officer (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Carol Mason, Director of Operations - Siksikaitstapi Chiefs Society (Kainai-Blood Tribe)

### **Leadership Team:**

- Dr. Genevieve Fox, Director of Education, Language and Culture (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Shirley Crop Eared Wolf, Director of Childrens Services and IELCC (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Kirby Smith, Director of Intergovernmental Relations (Piikani Nation)
- Ashley McDougall, Director of Finance (Piikani Nation)
- Jodi Running Rabbit, Executive Administrative Officer (Siksika Nation)
- Theoren Royal, Corporate Affairs and Communications Manager (Siksika Nation)
- Justin Bruised Head, Enviroment and Blackfoot Guardians Coordinator (Kainai-Blood Tribe)

### **Service Area, Project Coordination and Support:**

- Cassie Ayoungman, Promotion Coordinator, Destination Blackfoot (Siksika Nation)
- Travis Yellow Wings, Administrative Officer (Piikani Nation)
- Nitasha Scout, Administrative and Cultural Liaison Officer (Kainai-Blood Tribe)

### **Advisory Roles:**

- Charles Weasel Head, Health Consultant Advisor (Kainai-Blood Tribe)

### **Office and Building Management:**

- Robyn Cochrane-Starlight, Office Assistant/Reception (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Daryl Many Grey Horses, Maintainence Technician (Kainai-Blood Tribe)



June 2025

## Honouring One of Our Own | Andrea Yellow Horn

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council proudly congratulates Andrea Yellow Horn of Piikani Nation, a long-serving staff member who has carried our voices with strength and dignity at political, legal, and justice tables for many years.

June 10, 2025, she graduated from the University of Calgary's Faculty of Law — a powerful step forward not only for herself, but for all of us as Niitsitapi. Andrea's path reflects the strength of our ancestors and the vision of our future.

As she prepares to write the Alberta bar exam next year, we stand behind her with pride and confidence. She will soon join the ranks of Blackfoot legal warriors working to uphold our ways and defend our rights within today's systems.

We are proud to stand with her and look forward to all she will achieve as a Blackfoot lawyer.

## Whats Next:

- Blackfoot Confederacy Golf Tournament – September 5, 2025 (Coaldale, AB)
- Blackfoot Confederacy Annual Conference – September 15-18, 2025 (Lethbridge, AB)
- Blackfoot Confederacy Education Conference - October 9-10, 2025 (Calgary, AB)





STAY CONNECTED

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