



Biocultural Diversity in Large Landscape Conservation on the Great Northern Plains

A Niitsitapi applied perspective

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- ENGOS –
 - MRWCC
 - OWC
 - Water Matters

Background

- This presentation explores the notion of Biocultural Diversity through a *Niitsitapi* lens and the relevance to large landscape conservation. It provides an opportunity to consider the relationships of not only indigenous people but all of our relations to the environment. Further, it challenges everyone to become open to acknowledging the past, embracing the present, and creating a legacy for future generations.
- The Blackfoot Confederacy Environmental Knowledge, Traditional Territory and Language provide a context that expands to include all Tribes and First Nations within the area of interest to the conference/workshop.
- *Niitsitapi* is a term used by the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribes and literally means: The Real People.

Introduction

- **Synergistic relationship**
 - Language
 - Culture
 - Landscape
- **Sacred Places/Spaces**
- **Sacred Species**
- **Sacred Language**

What is Biocultural Diversity

- **Biocultural diversity** has emerged as a transdisciplinary based approach that focuses on the interlinkages between linguistic, cultural and biological diversity and promoting synergies for healthier communities and landscapes.
 - In recent decades, a growing plethora of discourse related to the inextricable link between cultural and biological diversity (Pretty *et al.* 2009, Maffi 2001, UNESCO 2007, *inter alia*) can be traced to the Declaration of Balem (1988).
 - Subsequently a number of related instruments (CBD 1992; UNESCO 2001; **UNDRIP 2007**, *inter alia*) including the Joint Programme Work of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity and UNESCO established in 2010 urge consideration in policy development at all scales (working document, CBD 2010).
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- **Biocultural diversity** and related sub-disciplines provide a platform to explore relationships between linguistics, culture and ecosystems recognizing that synergies between this triad create resiliency and adaptability (Pretty *et al.* 2009).
- Generally, approaches that consider culture and ecology as separate tend to bifurcate and isolate protection and preservation regimes. Tools developed from within sub-disciplines explore avenues for multi and interdisciplinary analysis but can lead to inherent limitations as research remains limited (CBD & UNESCO 2010, Pretty *et al.* 2009).

Why is a BCD perspective important? Challenges?

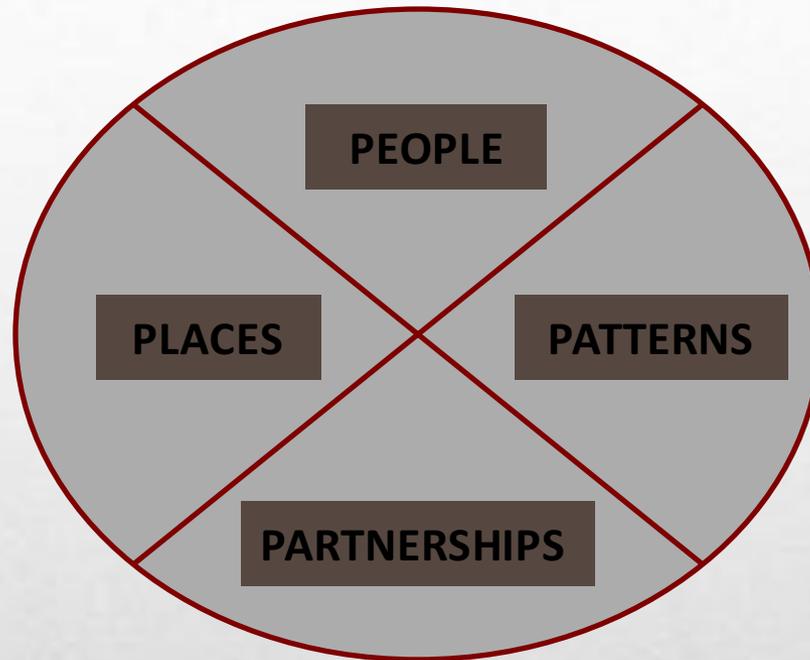
- Taken from an indigenous worldview – the separation of culture and ecology does not occur.
- Indigenous languages provide a unique lens into culture and relationships to the environment.

A Niitsitapi Perspective



Niitoyis

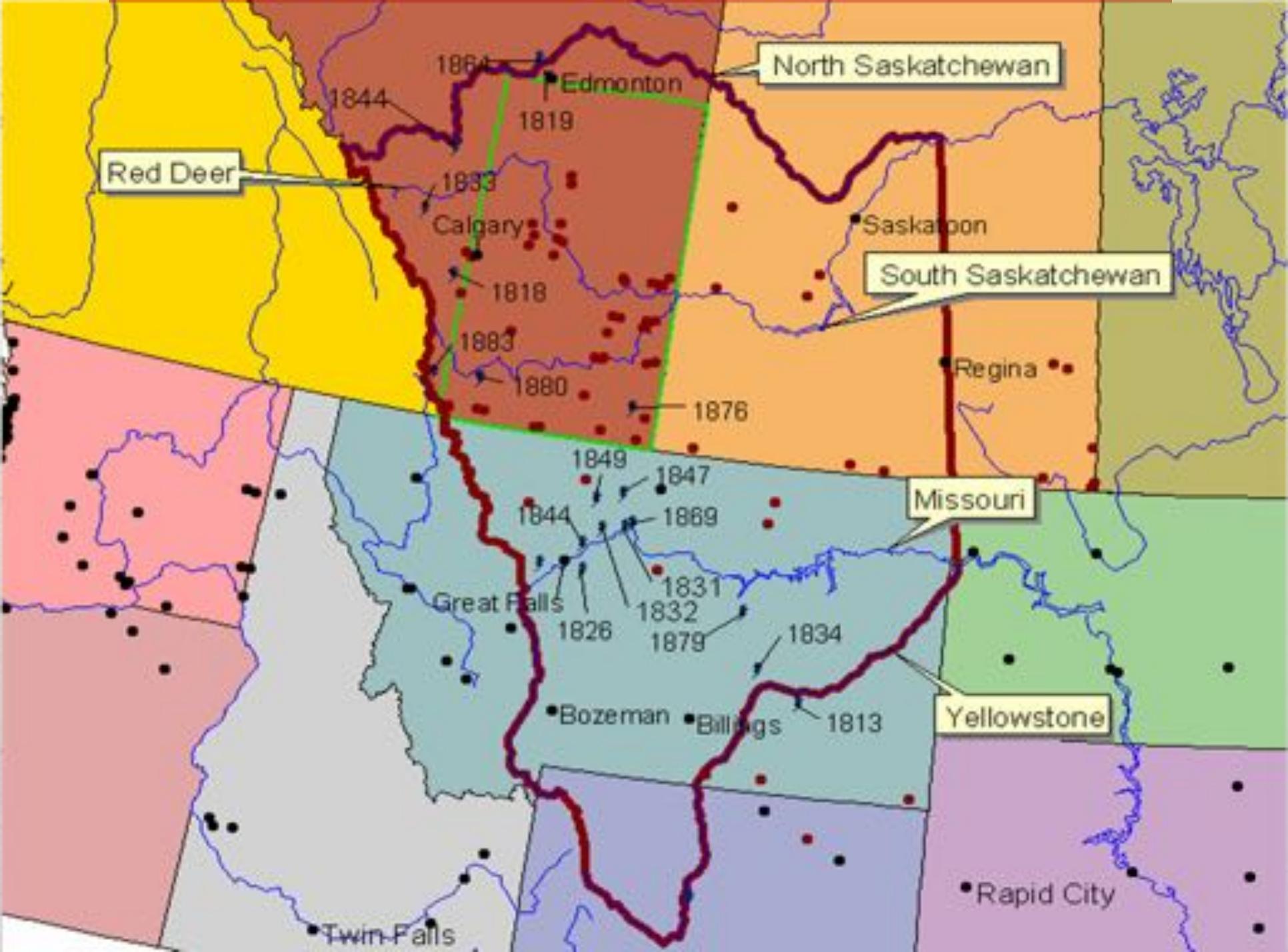




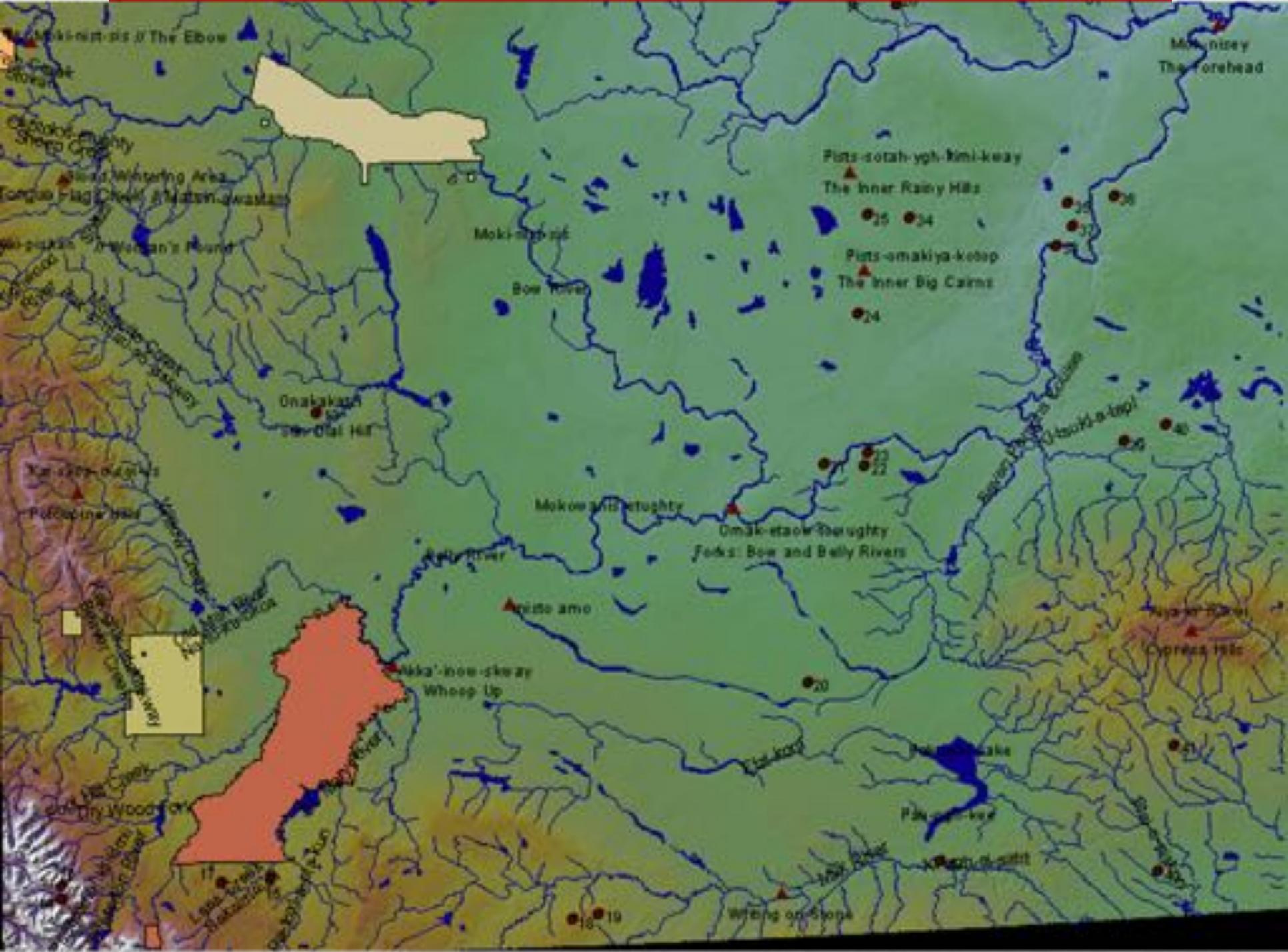
Place Names and Sacred Spaces







Year	Event	Note: (Courtesy Dempsey)
1780	When white man with short hair first came	n/a
1784	Coughing sickness first appearance	n/a
1791	When there were many wolves	n/a
1810*	Kaohsoyiiks/itsitotohpiyan When the cropped tails came	Wilson P. Hunt led the Astoria Expedition which passed just south of Blackfoot country in the summer of 1811. Irving (1897:187)observed that the party cropped the tails of the horses purchased from the Arikara
1813*	Itakesaopi When many of us went to war	Many Bloods went to raid the Crow Indians on the Big Horn River (WB)
1818*	Stokani Winter Sundance	A winter camp on sheep River was threatened by an attack from Crees, so a holy woman vowed an immediate Sun Dance to help her People. The attack did not come.
1819*	Saskina/pastsimesin Coughing/epidemic	In the winter of 1819/20, traders at Edmonton House reported that a measles epidemic had wiped out one third of the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre tribes. (Edmonton House Entries for Feb 6 and March 15, 1820).
1825	Itaka/ennastop Many/when they made a peace treaty	Wilson and Legal were told that the tribes participating in the treaty included the Bloods, Gros Ventres, Flatheads, Nez Perces and Kutenais.



Moki-nah-ah The Elbow

Moko-nisey
The Forehead

Clayton
Sheep Creek

Great Wintering Area
Tongue Flag Creek
Mason's Pound

Moki-nah-ah

Bow River

Pits-cotah-ygh-kimi-keay
The Inner Rainy Hills

Pits-amakiya-kelep
The Inner Big Cairns

Onakakah
The Old Hill

Moko-wah-ah

Omak-etaow-ah-ughty
Forks: Bow and Belly Rivers

Yukon
Pulchra Hill

Belly River

Aristo amo

Waka'-now-skeay
Whoop Up

Waka'-now-skeay
Cypress Hill

Waka'-now-skeay
Wood

Waka'-now-skeay
Wood

19 19

Writing on Stone

Pan-ah-ah

Waka'-now-skeay

Label	Blackfoot Information	Blackfoot Interpretation
Forks: Bow and Belly Rivers	Omak-etaow-towughty	Big Forks
Whoop Up	Akka'-inow-skway	Many Blood Indians Died
The Chin	misto amo	The beard
Porcupine Hills	Kai-skop-o-soi-us	
Woman's Pound	Aki-piskan	Woman's Pound
Cypress Hills	Aiya ki' mikwi	
Old Man's Bed	Napia-okanes	
The Forehead	Moh-nisey	
Wildcat Hills	Natayo-paghsin	
The Elbow	Moki-nist-sis	
Wintering Hills	Blackfoot Wintering Area	
Wintering Hills	Blood Wintering Area	
The Inner Rainy Hills	Pists-sotah-ygh-kimi-kway	
The Inner Big Cairns	Pists-omakiya-kotop	
Writing on Stone	n/a	

Label	Blood Information	Blackfoot Translation
Many Rosebuds River	Ako-kiniskway	
Blood Indian Creek		
Fish Creek	Stokan	Medicine Lodge
Sheep Creek	Okotokxi-etughty	Rocky River
Tongue Flag Creek	Matsin-awastam	
Highwood River	Spitzii	
Mosquito Creek	Pak-si-mau-so-yiskway	
Seven Persons Coulee	Ki-tsuki-a-tapi	
Willow Creek		
Belly River	Mokowanis-etughty	
Old Man River	Na-to-ke-okos	
Beaver Creek	Kak-ghik-stakiskway	Where the Beaver cuts wood
St. Mary River	Pa-toxi-a-pis-kun	Banks damming the river
Etzi-kom		
Waterton River		







PROJECTS



- **Species at Risk and Critical Habitat Protection**
- **Rangeland Health Assessments**
- **Noxious Weed Control Program**
- **Forest Health Initiatives**

IRF Summary Table: Target Species

Species name	Scientific Name	Blackfoot Name	COSEWIC Status
Burrowing Owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	Aatsitsii	Endangered
Sprague's Pipet	<i>Anthus spragueii</i>	Sistsi	Threatened
Swift Fox	<i>Vulpes Velox</i>	Sinopaa	Endangered





- Cultural & spiritual
- Elders requested return of Siinopaa
- Swift fox release on Blackfeet Reserve (1998-2003)









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photo: Geoff Holroyd





ACHF Summary Table: Target Species

Species name	Scientific Name	Blackfoot Name	COSEWIC Status
Short Eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	Kakana-tstookii	Special Concern
Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	Aapsipii-stoowa	Special Concern
Long Billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>	Makiniima	Special Concern



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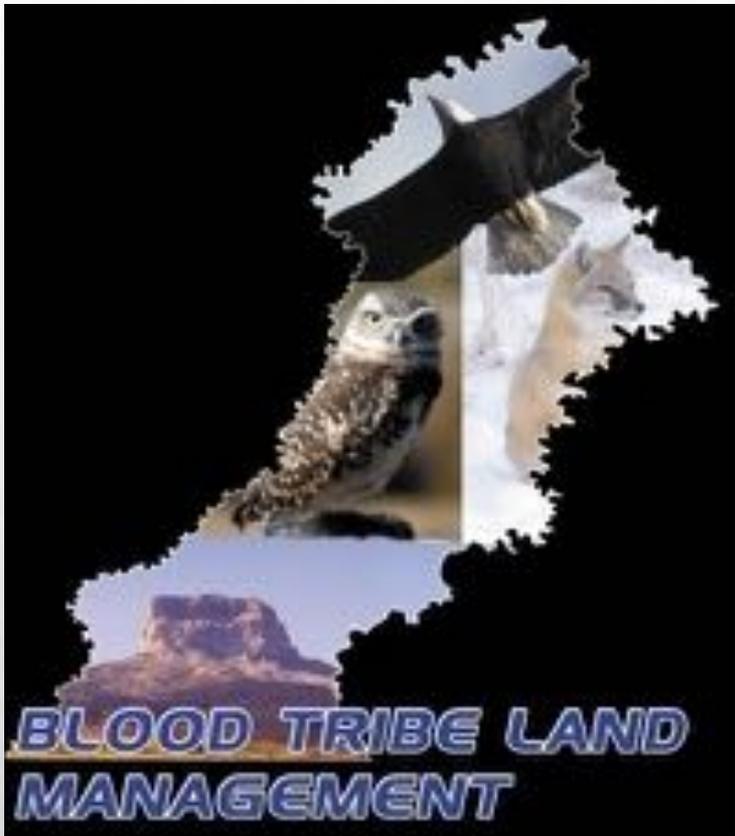
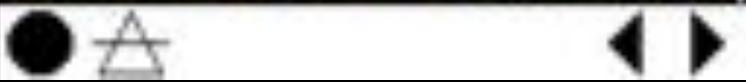


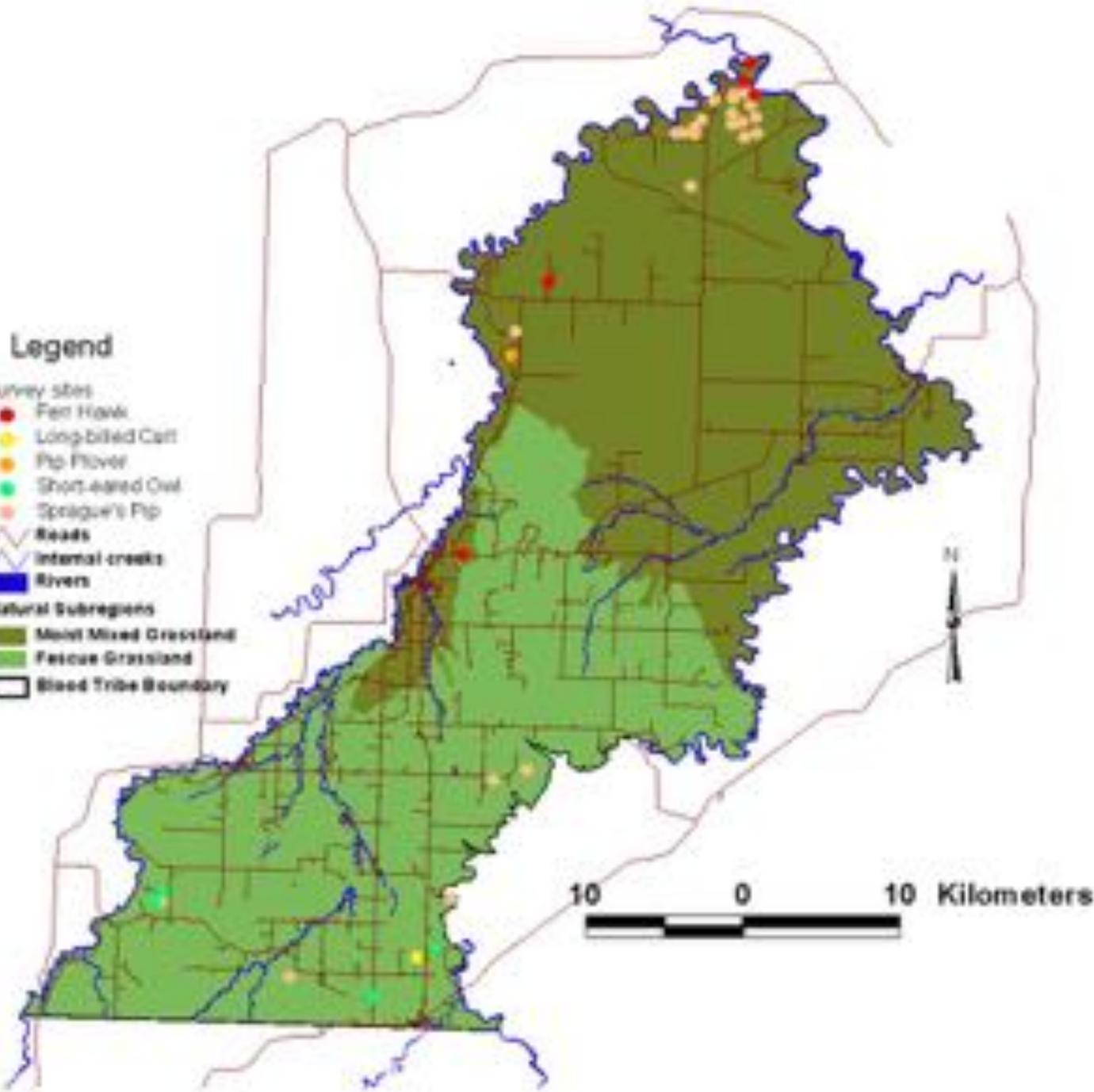


Ferruginous Hawk

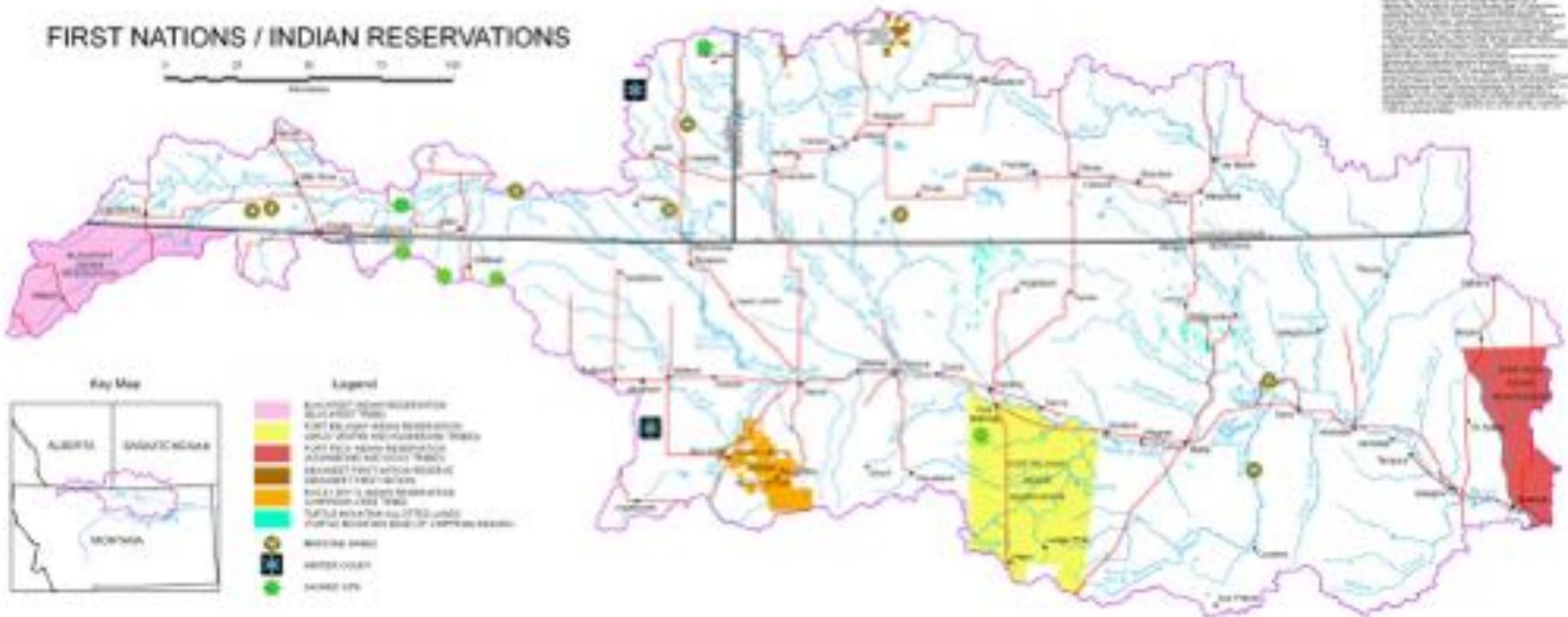
Buteo regalis

Image | Description | Information





FIRST NATIONS / INDIAN RESERVATIONS



MRWCC – SOW 2012

- *Itakainiskoy* – When there were plenty of Buffalo
- **The Mounted Police reported buffalo in the Blackfoot hunting grounds during the winter of 1876-77, but by the spring the herds were confined mostly to the Cypress Hills area (Turner, 1950, vol.1, 326)**

MRWCC - 1876

- The Blackfoot Elders say: the *Buffalo* bring us together, even traditional enemies.
- The last time a treaty occurred in Blackfoot memory, without a euro-derived state, was in 1825.
- The Buffalo Treaty is about Tribes and First Nations taking ownership of their struggles and recognizing their role and relationship to buffalo: past, present and future.
- Leaders when invited to treaty with the Blackfoot Confederacy, without hesitation would say: *For so long Buffalo took care of us, it is time we take care of the them.* ”
- It is in the spirit of “us” that an invitation is extended to include not only, Tribes and First Nations to embrace a new current of conservation, but also a call to the public to partner and support First Nation/Tribal led initiatives.

Buffalo Treaty



- *Encourage participatory research opportunities, and bottom-up development of policy and legislation*
- *Recognise, promote and scale up and replicate good local practices;*
- *Encourage and empower local communities to continue, transmit, and innovate traditional practices compatible with the sustainable use of biocultural diversity;*
- *Support local community organisations to develop initiatives for the conservation of biocultural diversity for resilient farming systems and local economies;*
- *Promote urban biological and cultural diversity through community grants, creation, preservation and maintenance of public green spaces, community gardens and greening of cities.*

BCD – Local

- *Inclusion of biocultural diversity into national and local planning for nature conservation and landscape management, protected areas, agricultural and forest landscapes;*
- *Incorporation of the links in sustainable forest management, including through the development of appropriate criteria and indicators;*
- *Recognition of positive interactions between biological and cultural diversity through appropriate certification process and labelling;*
- *Promoting the use of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for the promotion and valorisation of the links for scientists, policy makers and others.*

BCD – Regional

- *Incorporate biological and cultural diversity in rural and environmental policies;*
- *Make available funding for multi-disciplinary research;*
- *Establish cross-sectorial and/or cross departmental approaches;*
- *Provide mechanism for the review of relevant European and national policies and to take into account the links;*
- *Promote local production practices and resources for up-scaling and replication.*

BCD – National

- Canada - China (Guizhou) Ethnic Minority Culture and Heritage Protection Project is a bilateral cooperation project between China and Canada.
- It is funded, in part by the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA, along with the Chinese based Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM).
- The Chinese National Development and Reform Commission along with Canadian based Agriteam are the executive agencies. Sub-contractors, IRIS Environmental Systems and **Harmony Walkers Inc (HWI)** along with their associates comprise the implementation team.

International context





Questions? Comments?
