

Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) landmark

located at Ootssapi'tomowa (Look Out Hill), also known as Nose Hill

Why is the landmark located on Ootssapi'tomowa (Look Out Hill)?

Long before the city of Calgary was established, the Blackfoot people called Calgary Mohkínsstsis (Elbow River), which is a tributary off the Bow River. Look Out Hill was a sacred place for all Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot people). It's an observatory for the night sky and connects us to Blackfoot cosmology. There are many Blackfoot origin and creation stories that connect us to this place and are also documented by archeological records. This is a place where our people came for renewal ceremonies, practiced reciprocity and is a vision quest site. It was also a lookout point for our ancestors to assess their territory and create plans for their livelihood. It was an important part of our seasonal round calendar and served as a viewshed for linnii (buffalo) and various buffalo jumps. Our ancestors surveyed a variety of different hills, such as Hammer Hill southeast of Look Out Hill. Hammer Hill is named after the rock that we would find there, which would be considered a modern-day hammer and every Blackfoot woman owned one to crush berries.

What is the significance of the landmark?

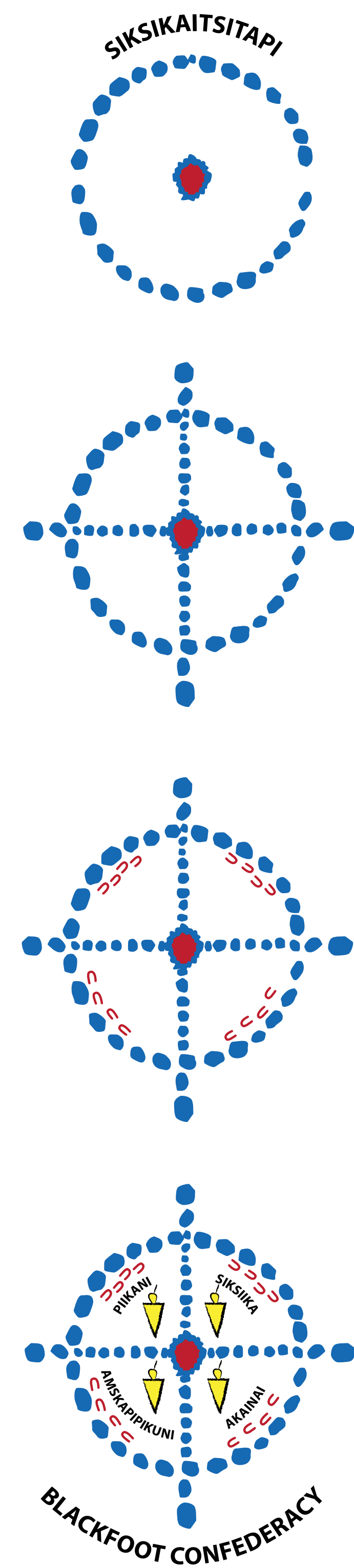
The Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) landmark is a way of maintaining our connection to the land, a place we can revisit and make sacred offerings in recognition of our special kinship to the land and the environment. Our traditional Blackfoot knowledge systems guide our life as Nitsitapi "The Real People" we believe we are equal partners in the universe with all other beings. We continue to use the landmark to mark our Blackfoot territory and to record our achievements.

Who designed the landmark?

Respected elder Aatso'taowa (Andy Blackwater) from Kainai designed the Siksikaitsitapi landmark, in keeping with the traditional Siksikaitsitapi practice of leaving a landmark wherever we travel within our homeland. Andy chose symbols that tie us back to our roots, our traditions, our values, our worldview and our territory. Andy understood the importance of placing a landmark wherever we went within our Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot) territory to reinforce our kinship with the land and give notice to others that these are the lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy. It is important that we continue to recount the story, maintain the practice and acknowledge the gift of vision and symbolism that Aatso'tawa left with us.

What do the symbols mean within the landmark?

The Siksikaitsitapi landmark is an Aakihtsimaani or stone marking. The Siksikaitsitapi have been placing Aakihtsimaani on landscapes around their territory for thousands of years to mark significant events. The Siksikaitsitapi Blackfoot Confederacy landmark expresses our Blackfoot essence, our Blackfoot identity and our Confederacy vision. Each symbol serves as a physical manifestation of our identity, validates our reality and unifies our Blackfoot people. The four sacred colors of Siksikaitsitapi are represented blue, red, yellow and black.



The outside ring represents a Momma'pis (Blackfoot tipi). The circle indicates the cycle of life. The center of the circle signifies the home fire or place of belonging, which is symbolic in Siksikaitsitapi identity.

The cross through the circle is the signature of a war chief or leader. Akokskainaa is a prominent Chief or leader who may also be referred to as Aotamooi or Aisowoo.

Aotamooi, the red tracks represent a leader of a war party. The hoof marks refer to the connection between the Nations and their movement with the seasons and game.

The triangles in each quarter represent the four Blackfoot nations and each nation has a distinct symbol.

Protocols – We encourage you to visit the landmark in a respectful manner and follow these protocols:

- This is a sacred site, do not alter or remove any rocks or offerings.
- The public is encouraged to use the landmark respectfully as a place of prayer (offer tobacco) and reflection.
- The intent is to have this sacred landmark benefit future generations of Siksikaitsitapi and the general public.
- If there is any vandalism to the landmark, please notify The City of Calgary at 311.

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