

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA Celebrates Writing-on-STONE

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World Heritage Sites represent some of Humanity's most Outstanding Achievements and Nature's most Inspiring Creations. They are considered to have Outstanding Universal Value, and are protected for the Benefit of all Humanity. Yesterday, Writing-on-Stone / Áísínai'pi, in Alberta, was inscribed on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, Catherine McKenna, took the opportunity to celebrate this ancient and sacred place as Canada's twentieth World Heritage site, and to congratulate those involved in developing and presenting its nomination.

Writing-on-Stone / Áł̨'ísínai'pi is an Ancient and Sacred Cultural Landscape where Indigenous Peoples have created Rock Art for Millennia. Thousands of Petroglyphs and Pictographs, the Greatest Concentration of Rock Art on the Great Plains of North America, represent the Powers of the Spirit World that resonate in this Sacred Landscape, and Chronicle Critical Phases of Human History in North America, including when Indigenous Peoples first came into contact with Europeans.

With an exceptional combination of Culturally Significant Landforms, Rock Art, Archaeological Heritage, and Dramatic Views, Writing-On-Stone / Áłłisínai'pi ("it is Pictured/Written") is a Sacred Place for the Blackfoot People. In Blackfoot Traditions, Sacred Beings Dwell among the Cliffs and Hoodoos, and the Voices of the Ancestors can be heard among the Canyons and Cliffs. To this day the Blackfoot feel the Energy of the Sacred Beings at Writing-on-Stone / Áłłisínai'pi, and their Oral Histories and Ongoing Ceremonial use of the Site attest to the Living Traditions of the Blackfoot People.

The decision to inscribe Writing-on-Stone / Áłı̨łisınai'pi on the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage List was made by the World Heritage Committee during its annual meeting, which is taking place in Baku, Azerbaijan. The timing of this Inscription is fitting as 2019 marks the International Year of Indigenous Languages. Indigenous Languages are an Essential Part of the Cultural Fabric of Canada and play a Critical Role in safeguarding Indigenous Knowledge, Cultural Practices, Worldviews, Spiritual Values, Intergenerational Learning, and the History of the Landscape we know as Canada. The Government of Canada recently recognized the importance of Indigenous Languages through the Passage of the Indigenous Languages Act, which will reclaim, revitalize, strengthen, and maintain Indigenous Languages in Canada.

In Celebration of the International Year of Indigenous Languages and the Inscription of this new World Heritage site, Canadians are encouraged to help support the Revitalization of Indigenous Languages in Canada, and are invited to visit Canada's nNtwork of Heritage Places to learn more about Indigenous Languages, Knowledge, Cultures, and Traditions.

* Writing-on-Stone / Áísínai'pi is fully contained within the boundaries of Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park, in the province of Alberta. Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park is managed by Alberta Parks, with ongoing guidance from the elders of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

* Áłłisínai'pi is the name that Blackfoot people use for the area, which means "it is pictured/written". This ancient name was also formally recognized through the designation of Áłłisínai'pi as a National Historic Site of Canada in 2004, the same year it was added to Canada's Tentative List for World Heritage.

* There are over 1,000 sites on the World Heritage List worldwide.

* Parks Canada is the lead agency for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Canada due to its longstanding experience and depth of expertise in the conservation of both natural and cultural places. Twelve of Canada's twenty World Heritage sites are areas managed in part or in whole by Parks Canada.

* The United Nations declared 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages in order to raise global awareness about Indigenous peoples' cultural and linguistic rights.

* On June 21, 2019, the Indigenous Languages Act received Royal Assent. The Government of Canada will work with Indigenous representative organizations, Indigenous governments, and provinces and territories for its implementation. To support this implementation, Budget 2019 includes an investment of \$333.7 million over five years, and \$115.7 million annually thereafter.

Source : Parks Canada

Ruby BIRD

<http://www.portfolio.uspa24.com/>

Yasmina BEDDOU

<http://www.yasmina-beddou.uspa24.com/>

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD

483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS

contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

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