

# An Holistic Approach to Conservation, Agriculture Resource Management, and Food Sovereignty in Blackfeet Country

*at Amskapi Piikani (Blackfeet Nation)*

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Blackfoot Confederacy Traditional Territory

*Our land is more valuable than your money. It will last forever. It will not even perish by the flames of fire. As long as the sun shines and the waters flow, this land will be here to give life to men and animals. We cannot sell the lives of men and animals. It was put here by (Creator) and we cannot sell it because it does not belong to us. - Crowfoot, Blackfeet Orator*

*Treat the earth well: We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children – Crazy Horse*

*When our hands are facing up, we will always be hungry, when our hands are facing down and working the earth, we will never be hungry –  
Native Hawaiian Elder*

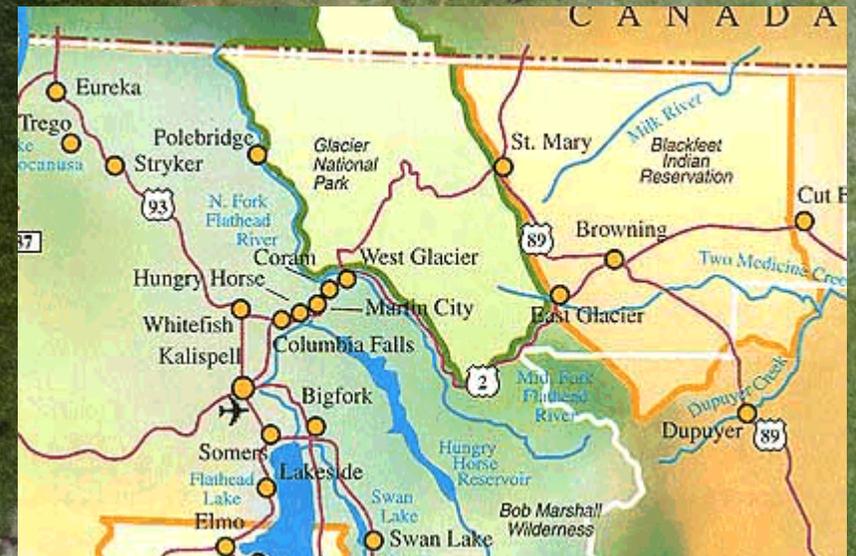


BLACKFEET NATION



# Roadmap

- Blackfeet Ways of Knowing
- Blackfeet Ways of Knowing
- Authority
- What is the Role of the Blackfeet Tribal Government
- How We Plan from a Holistic Place
- Current Projects
- Blackfeet Conservation Area



# CONTEXT

- **Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy), a transboundary Indigenous government (Canada + USA).**

## **Amskapi Piikani (Blackfoot Nation)**

- **1.5 million acres (640,000 hectares).** Recently acquired 324,404 acres of fractionated interests.
- **Larger than the state of Delaware (or nation of Puerto Rico).**
- **80% percent of the large Vertebrates in Montana**
- **55% of the Regions Biodiversity**
- **Water rights to 5 watersheds, 518 miles (833 Kilometers) of streams and 180 bodies of water at the headwaters of the continent.**
- **51,582 acres (20,874 hectares) of wetlands.**
- **175,000 acres (70,820 hectares) of forest.**



# BLACKFEET WAYS OF KNOWING, BEING & PLANNING

## Amskapi Piikani Core Values:

[Tsi-ksi-ka-ta-pi-wa-tsin](#) Blackfeet Ways of Knowing: Blackfeet culture/spirituality in philosophy, thought and action

[Nin-na-wa-tsin](#) Being a Leader: professionalism, integrity, and responsibility in human interaction

[Ini-yimm](#) Respect: respect for one self, all other people, all ideas and each thing in the natural world

[Ni-ta-pi-pa-ta-pi-tsin](#) Living in a Good Way: honest in all thoughts and actions.

[li-yi-kah-kii-ma-tsin](#) Trying Hard: commitment, dedication, sincerity in the pursuit of all our goals.

[Aoh-kan-otah-tomo](#) Accepting Everyone: embracing the unique talents and contributions of each individual.

[li-ta-mii-pa-ta-pi-yoip](#) Happy Living: humor, laughter and enjoyment of life.

# Authority: Public Law 103-77

(The American Indian Agriculture Resource Management Act of 1993)

## 2019 Blackfeet Agriculture Resource Management Plan

### 1.2 Authority

*The Blackfeet Nation's ARMP derives its authority to supersede Federal regulations from the American Indian Agriculture Resource Management Act (AIARMA) of 1993 – 25 U.S.C § 3702 & 3712, as well as Blackfeet Tribal Resolution 19-2015. As defined by the Code itself, United States Departments of Interior and Agriculture shall manage agricultural resources consistent with the Blackfeet Nation's ARMP.*

## Indian agricultural resource management planning program

(C) Whether developed directly by the tribe or by the Secretary, the plan shall-

- determine available agriculture resources;
- identify specific tribal agricultural resource goals and objectives;
- establish management objectives for the resources;
- **define critical values of the Indian tribe and its members and provide identified holistic management objectives;**
- identify actions to be taken to reach established objectives;
- be developed through public meetings;
- use the public meeting records, existing survey documents, reports, and other research from Federal agencies, tribal community colleges, and land grant universities; and
- be completed within three years of the initiation of activity to establish the plan.

# What is the role of a Tribal Government? A triple bottom Line

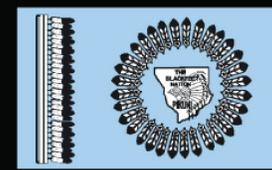


- Sustainable Economic Development
  - Private sector vs. public sector
  - Tribal enterprise or service to people
    - Siyeh Corporation Model
      - Tribal ranches
      - Agriculture enterprises
  - Become Supplier for local food delivery systems
    - Schools, USDA Commodity programs, Medicine Bear Shelter, Food Banks, Blackfeet FAST, Senior Centers, Traditional Food Preparers
- Health and Nutrition – Narrow Health Disparities
  - Agriculture production
  - Re-introduction of traditional foods into our diets
    - Buffalo
    - Wild game
    - Berries
    - Other foods
- Infusion of Institutional Knowledge into our Younger Generations
  - Youth programs
    - 4-H
    - High School, Middle School and BCC Agriculture Programs



# How We Plan

Emerging best practices with the Amskapi Piikani (Blackfeet Nation)  
in Agriculture Resource Management, Water and Land Use Planning



1



**We ground our planning in Piikani values and stewardship of the land.**

We are the first conservationists and our knowledges are place based.

2



**We make our plans in house.**

Compacting and contracting exercises our rights ( using ISDA 93-638 & PL 280) improves our self-governance and builds capacity.

3



**We collaborate with our people.**

In making our plans and policies we share the process and power through live polling and citizen committees.

4



**We use high quality data.**

This includes our own studies, statistics and watershed level analysis by our GIS department and partners.

5



**We recognize both traditional and modern land use and livelihoods.**

We do facilitated strategic planning with all stakeholders impacted.

6



**We engage necessary partnerships to plan.**

In partnerships and applied research we retain consent, our sovereignty, Intellectual Property and Indigenous rights.

7



**We make sure our plan is implementable.**

By noting our capacities, a timeline, needed resources, and Indigenous statistics to monitor with we ensure that plans do not sit on shelves.

8



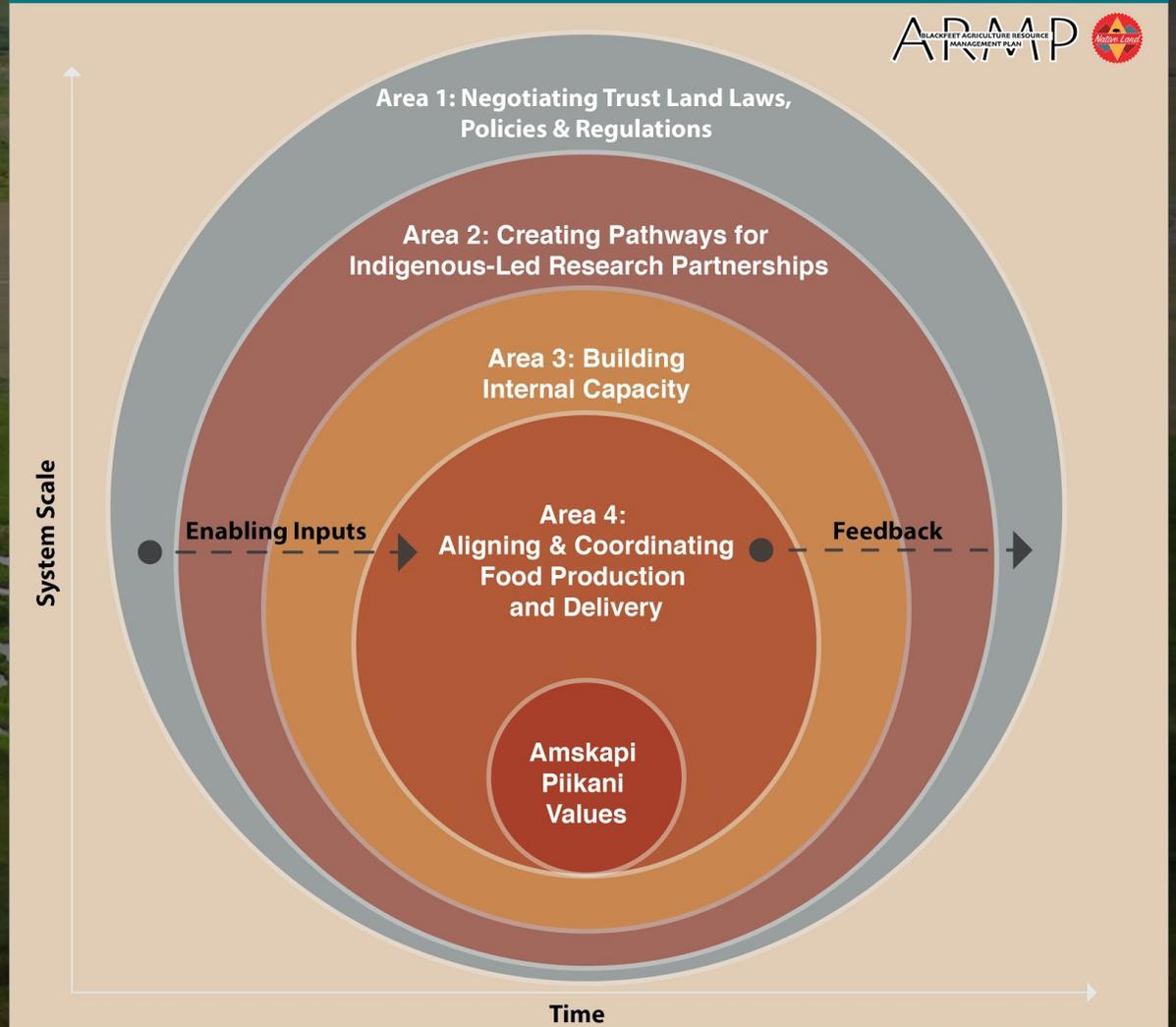
**We learn how to plan better.**

By monitoring and evaluating the process and the outcomes we make space for learning and adaptation. Doing this we improve our practice of planning as we have from time immemorial.

# Challenges to Planning and Implementation

- Produce and Write the Plan (Pro's and Con's)
  - Internal
    - Buy In
    - More control over deliverables
  - External
    - Less Control
    - No buy in
- Implementation
  - Current Stressors to Tribal Governments
  - Measurable Goals
  - Measurable Objectives
  - Ties to Human Capital
  - GIS and limited Access Policy
    - Blackfeet Tribe
    - Other Partners

## Blackfeet Innovation Pathways to Food Sovereignty



# Amskapi Piikani Agriculture Resource Management

An Indigenous approach to systems change



## Piikani Strategic Pillars



**1** Create Sustainable Economic Development



**2** Strengthen Our Cultural Knowledge – “Ihkitsiika”



**3** Increase Organizational Development



**4** Invest in the Piikani People



**5** Promote Health, Healing and Nutrition



## Indigenous Planning

### Our Plans

Agriculture Resource Management Plan  
Food Sovereignty  
Climate Adaptation  
Local Economic Development  
Capital Improvement  
Water Resource Management

### Our Research & Tools

Tribal Research Agenda & IRB  
Enterprise GIS  
O’Komi & FAST surveys  
Applied research partnerships

### Our Future

Intergenerational Engagement  
Agricultural Extension and 4H  
Blackfeet Community College  
Partnerships with Universities

## Our Land, Natural Resources & Rights

Tribal Codes

Resolving Fractionated Interest on Indian trust land

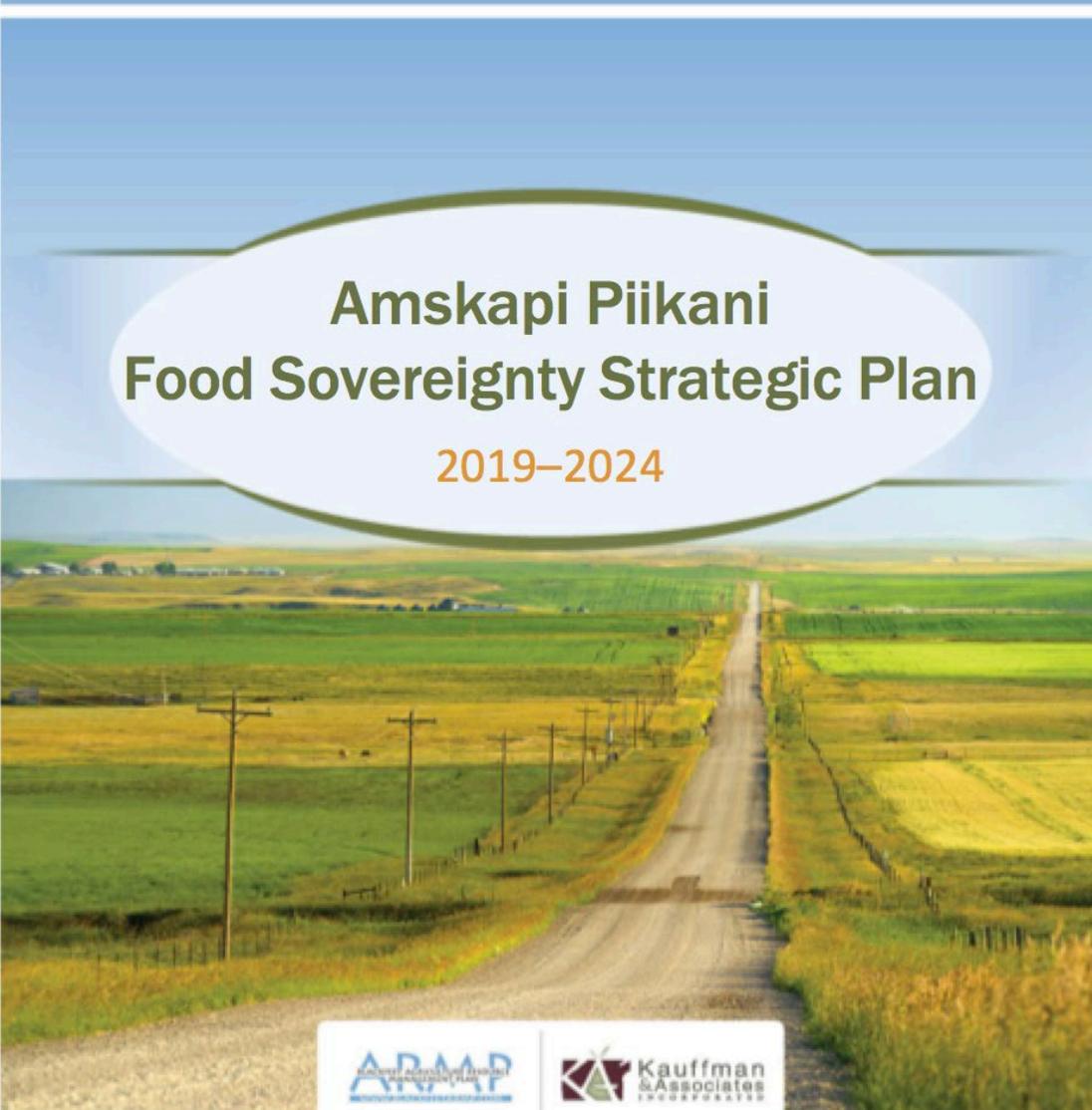
Mobilizing Tribal Trust Land

Blackfeet Indian Land Trust

Conservation Areas & Tribal Parks

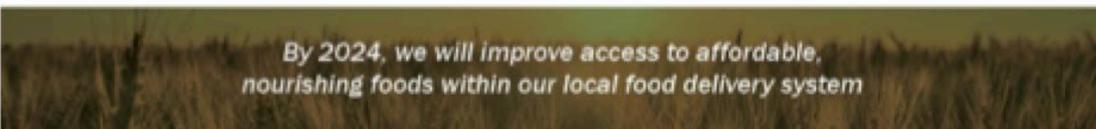
Self-Governance & Participation

Exercising International Treaty Rights

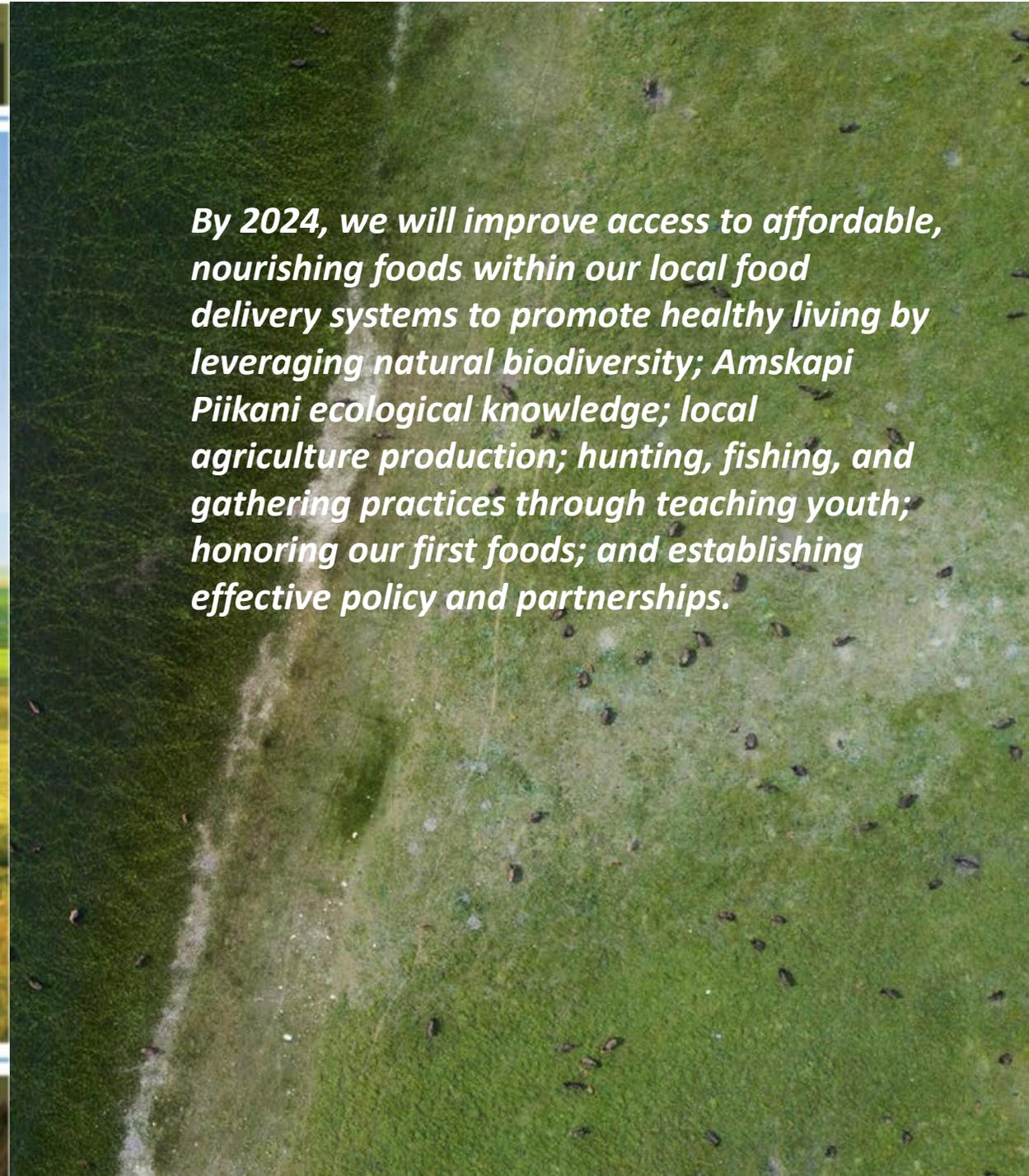


**Amskapi Piikani  
Food Sovereignty Strategic Plan**

**2019–2024**



*By 2024, we will improve access to affordable,  
nourishing foods within our local food delivery system*



*By 2024, we will improve access to affordable,  
nourishing foods within our local food  
delivery systems to promote healthy living by  
leveraging natural biodiversity; Amskapi  
Piikani ecological knowledge; local  
agriculture production; hunting, fishing, and  
gathering practices through teaching youth;  
honoring our first foods; and establishing  
effective policy and partnerships.*

# IMPLEMENTING OUR VISION

## *Active Projects & Initiatives at the Confederacy Level*

### 1. linnii Initiative

*Buffalo reintroduction & cultural revitalization*

### 2. Blackfoot Prime

*Ag. Co-op & Confederacy Wide Beef Label*

### 3. Multi-Species Processing Facility

For Beef & Buffalo

### 4. Local Food Delivery System

*Local & traditional foods to the people*

### 5. International Market Access

*For ag. products and development of our own border crossing*

### 6. Indigenous Led Conservation

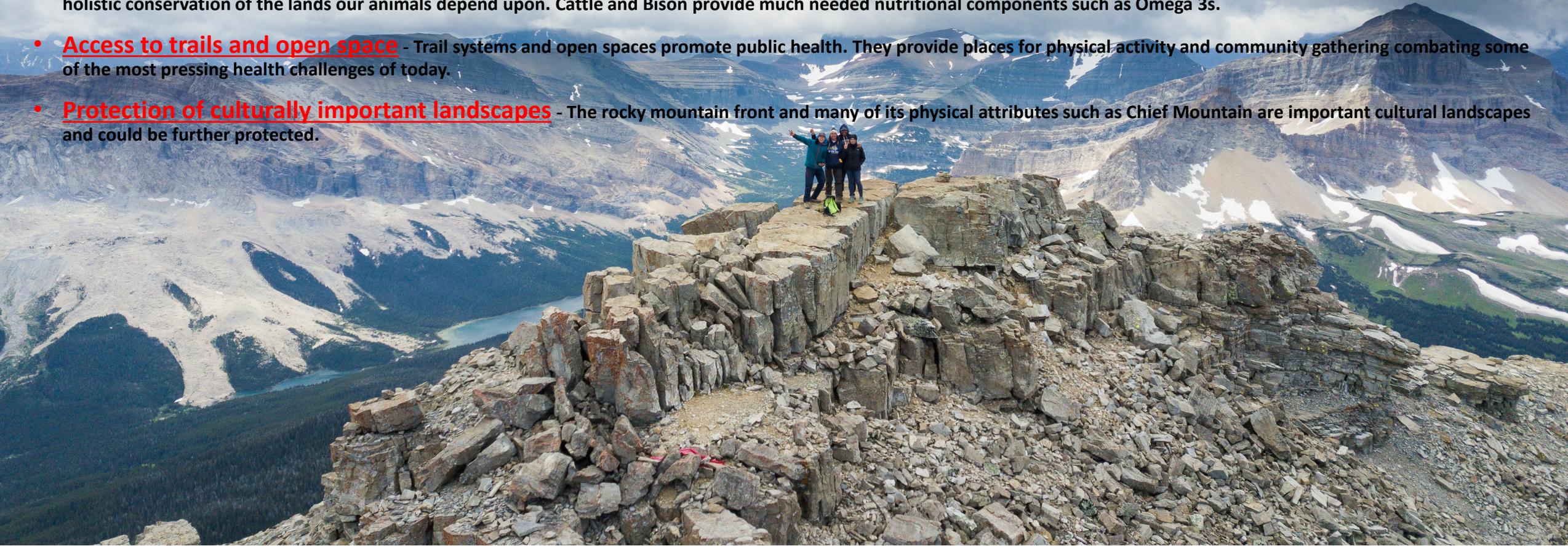
*Indigenous planning of conservation areas, parks & resource mgmt*

### 7. GIS Inventory & Mapping

*Traditional Foods, Use & Occupancy*

# A Proposed Blackfeet Conservation Area

- **Economic/Tourism development** – A formal Blackfeet Conservation Area adjacent to Glacier National Park will greatly spur economic development opportunities from tourism through gate entrances fees, toll roads (turnpikes), and tourism services (campgrounds, trails, guides, cultural interpretation centers).
- **Large landscape connectivity** - Conservation lands would link in with the existing international conservation network of Glacier National Park, Waterton Lakes National Park, U.S. Forestry, and the Blood Timber Reserve creating better connectivity and a larger protected landscape, as well as possibilities for linnii habitat.
- **Prairie land designation** – Prairie land designation can protect working lands which contribute directly to local grassland and wetland systems. Healthy grasslands also support healthy grazers (cattle and bison) which in turn support healthy people. By supporting prairie grass we can help overcome the health disparities of our people through the holistic conservation of the lands our animals depend upon. Cattle and Bison provide much needed nutritional components such as Omega 3s.
- **Access to trails and open space** - Trail systems and open spaces promote public health. They provide places for physical activity and community gathering combating some of the most pressing health challenges of today.
- **Protection of culturally important landscapes** - The rocky mountain front and many of its physical attributes such as Chief Mountain are important cultural landscapes and could be further protected.



# A Proposed Blackfeet Conservation Area

- **Mission:** develop formal conservation areas controlled, owned and managed by the Blackfeet people which in turn spurs economic development opportunities.
- **Vision:** Blackfeet Conservation Collective is for a conservation landscape which supports the health of both Blackfeet lands and people.

The goals of the Blackfeet Conservation Collective are to:

- designate a Blackfeet Conservation Area (National Park)
- designate Prairie Land Designations
- enhance large landscape connectivity and become a part of an international conservation landscape
- support climate change action through carbon sequestration and other methodologies
- protect endangered species
- protect the headwaters
- support economic opportunities including entrances fees, tourism services, campgrounds, trails, guides, cultural interpretation centers
- support beef and bison production
- develop trails and open space to support community wellness
- protect culturally important areas
- reintegrate into our natural landscapes and ways of being
- support of traditional foods such as bison (linnii), plants and berries



# A Proposed Blackfeet Conservation Area

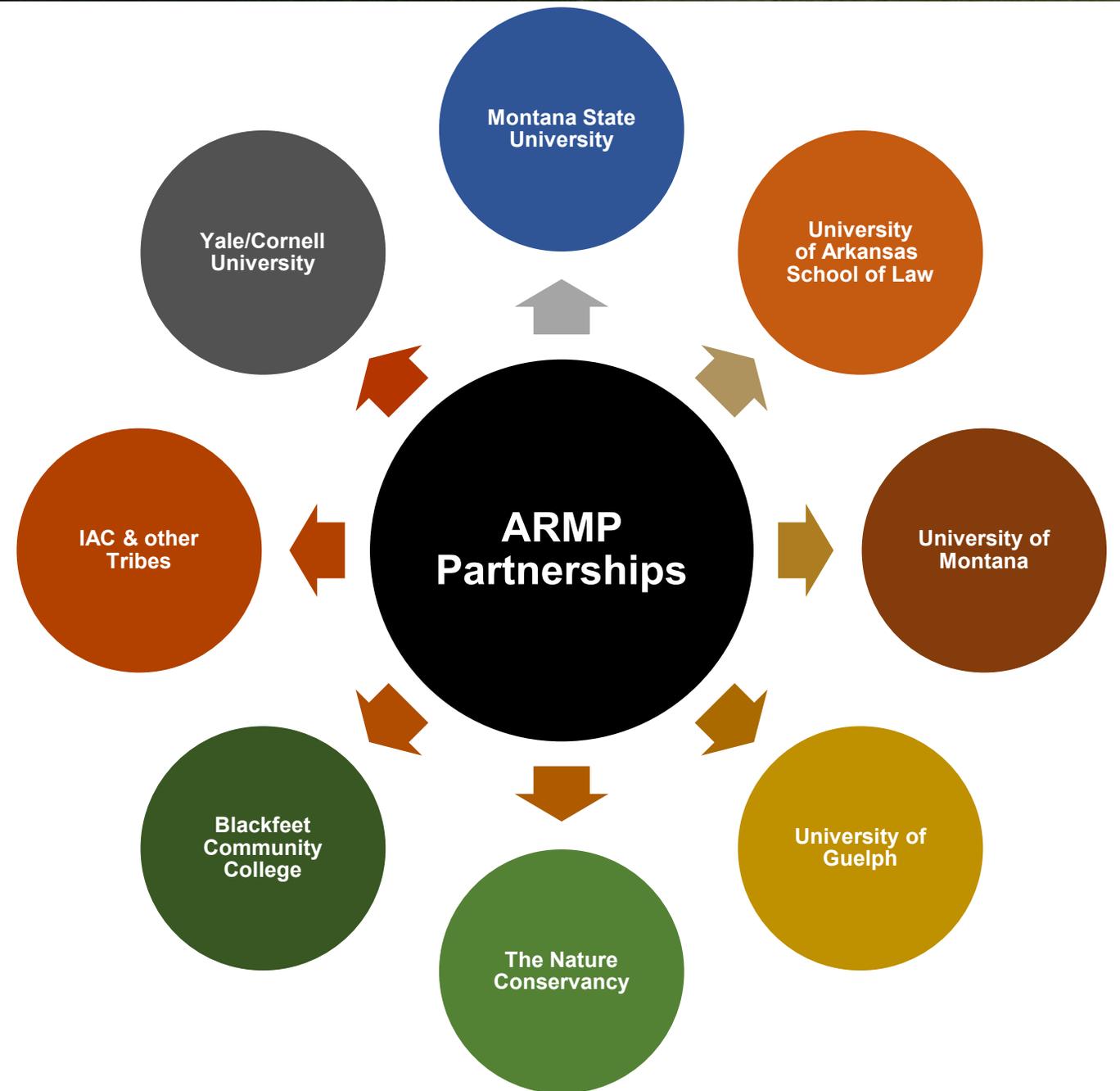
- **Objectives:**

- **Cultural Impact**
- **Ecological Impact**
- **Environmental Impact**
- **Economic Impact**



# Current Research Projects through Partnerships

- Montana State University – CTRP – Food Sovereignty, The Native Land Project (Native American Studies) O’komi Survey, Process Mapping, Indigenous Research Initiative,
- University of Arkansas School of Law and Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative – Food Safety Modernization Act, Tribal Food and Agriculture Code
- University of Montana School of Law – Native Uniform Commercial Code, Probate Code, Tribally owned National Parks
- National Center for Appropriate Technology – Beef/Bison Processing Plant, International Market Study
- Piikani Lodge Institute – Cultural Reclamation, Environmental Protection, Community Priority Research
- University of Guelph – Indigenous Conservation and linnii/Beef Production Challenges
- Cornell University – Biodiversity and Watershed Management Plan
- Yale University – Bison/Beef Conversion
- Clark University/BCC (Wildlife Conservation Society) – Blackfeet Wetlands and Range Health Mapping Project



# What are the roles of NGO's and Nonprofit Organizations?



The Council for Nonprofits

- **How do you turn passion into power?**
  - Hopa Mountain Strengthening the Circle
  - Western Native Voice 2012 Voter Turnout
  - Montana Legislature Advocacy
  - Tribal government policy development
- **Data Gaps in Indian Country**
  - Government Data
  - Tribal Data
  - Assisting Tribes in creating and securing their own Data
- **Filling the necessary voids**
  - Providing services that augment Tribal government efforts
  - Building and investing in local established institutions
  - Informing policy development process
  - Writing policy through resolutions, ordinances and codes
- **Equitable Partnerships**
  - Build Capacity in Tribal Communities
  - Employ Native People in Native Communities

phi·lan·thro·py

/fə'lanTHrəpē/

*noun*

the desire to promote the welfare of others, expressed especially by the generous donation of money to good causes.

- Support equitable partnerships that build capacity in Indian Country
  - Budget Equity
  - Support for FTE's based in Indian Country
- Require non-Native organizations to have real partnerships with on-the-ground efforts in Indian Country
- Support efforts that are community led and community developed
- Support efforts that have a translational model
- Support efforts that work across governments and organizations to leverage resources

What are the roles of Funders?





# THANK YOU FUTURE WEST

Find Us @ [www.blackfeetarmy.com](http://www.blackfeetarmy.com) + [www.montana.edu/nativeland](http://www.montana.edu/nativeland)

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