



# Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

## **WILDER INSTITUTE/CALGARY ZOO AND SIKSIKA NATION SIGN HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP**

**22 FEBRUARY 2022 (Calgary, AB)** -- At a ceremony held this morning at the zoo, the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo and the Siksika Nation Tribal Administration (“Siksika Nation”) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) with the goal of developing a respectful, strong, and equitable relationship related to supporting reconciliation and creating opportunities for the Siksika people.

In the spirit of respect and reconciliation, the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo acknowledges that the zoo is located near the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers on the historical lands of the Blackfoot people - a traditional meeting place of the First Nations for centuries before Europeans came. In Blackfoot, this area is called Moh-kíns-tsis. Through this historic partnership, the zoo is hoping to build on that history and foster a strong and trusted partnership with the Siksika Nation.

“We are proud to partner with the Siksika Nation to integrate recognition of their long presence on these precious lands into our interpretive programs, particularly in the Canadian Wilds, and to create opportunities to advance understanding and reconciliation,” stated Clément Lanthier, President & CEO. “By working together, we hope to honour the history of stewardship of the Siksika Nation, a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy,”

Among the shared principles of the MOU, both parties have agreed to build respectful relationships in areas of shared interest including an annual meeting to hear updates from the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo about its conservation programs with plant and animal species at risk within the traditional Blackfoot lands, and to hear the observations and counsel of Siksika Nation. The parties will also explore equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities including developing ways to engage the young minds in Siksika Nation in discussions around conservation and inspiring future careers focusing on animal welfare and conservation.

“We look forward to building a relationship built on mutual respect & understanding. There is a lot we can learn from an organization such as the Calgary Zoo, and there is much traditional knowledge we can share with the Calgary Zoo, especially as it pertains to the lands and animals native to the area Calgary Zoo now calls home. As we continue to build strong partnerships, it creates an atmosphere of growth & opportunities for our People. We are excited to see this partnership grow, for the betterment of the Siksika, Calgary Zoo, Calgarians and all Albertans.”  
Chief Ouray Crowfoot.

This agreement serves as an important milestone along the path to reconciliation and collaboration, one which the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo hopes will honour the history of the Blackfoot people and foster an enduring friendship between both parties.



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We have rebranded and appreciate you referring to us as "Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo" or "the zoo" in print and "Wilder Institute and the Calgary Zoo" verbally. Thanks for helping us get the word out!

## For more information contact:

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## About the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo

For more than 30-years, the Calgary Zoo has led critical wildlife conservation work through the Calgary Zoo, its rural Wildlife Conservation Breeding Centre, as well as across Canada and around the world. The zoo is internationally recognized for world-class animal care and habitat design practices and takes pride in inspiring and educating generations of visitors about the importance of biodiversity and conservation during visits. As the Calgary Zoo continues its journey to be Canada's leader in wildlife conservation, we are pleased to introduce the world to the Wilder Institute.

The Wilder Institute is the rebranded Calgary Zoo Foundation and oversees the Calgary Zoo's conservation portfolio, locally and globally. Together, we will continue to be a force of nature for making the world a wilder place. The staff and volunteers of Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo are passionate about restoring balance to wildlife and human life, together. As visitors discover the rare and endangered species that we love and care for at our facilities, they are directly contributing through admission and on-grounds sales to a not-for-profit charitable conservation organization that works to fight extinction of plants and animals worldwide. Learn more at [WilderInstitute.org](http://WilderInstitute.org) and [CalgaryZoo.com](http://CalgaryZoo.com).

## About Siksika Nation

Since time immemorial, the Children of the Plains, the Siksikai'tsitapi – Blackfoot People, have lived in and protected a territory that stretches from the North Saskatchewan River in present day Alberta and Saskatchewan to the Yellowstone River in the state of Montana, from the Continental Divide in the west to Regina in the province now known as Saskatchewan.

Today, Siksika Nation population is approximately 7800+ and is part of the Siksikaitsitapi – Blackfoot Confederacy. The Siksikaitsitapi refers to four Indigenous Nations which make up the Blackfoot people: the Siksika (Blackfoot), the Kainai (Many Chiefs), the Apatohsippiikani (Northern Peigan) and Amsskapipiikani (Southern Peigan). Siksikai'powahsini (Blackfoot Language) is the language of the Siksikaitsitapi.