



## Piikani Archeology Conference Speaker Bios

This document presents a short bio and presentation description of all speakers at the Piikani Archeology Conference. For contact info and further information on presentations, please see the presenter, who will be available throughout the conference with their cards.

### PATRICK A ARMSTRONG JR

*NATOOSIIAKOOMAPII - (SUN BOY)*

Patrick D. Armstrong Jr. serves as Secretary of the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, where he advocates for tribal sovereignty, economic development, and community well-being. A proud member of the Blackfeet Nation, Patrick dedicated over 15 years as a Blackfoot language educator and teacher for Browning Public Schools, working to preserve and revitalize the Blackfoot language for future generations. He has also been actively involved in youth mentorship, cultural programming, and community organizing efforts across the reservation, including being a long-term Montana High School Association sports official, winning the Official of the Year for several years.



Co-Master of Ceremonies

### KENT AYOUNGMAN

*KAYIHTSIPIMIOHKITOPi- Riding a Pinto Horse*

Kent is a Ceremonial Knowledge Keeper and former Band Councilor of the Siksika Nation. He has collaborated closely with the University of Calgary's Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, contributing guidance to projects such as the Digitally Preserving Former Indian Residential Schools in Alberta initiative and the Siksika Archaeology Field School. His work bridges Indigenous ceremonial knowledge with academic research, supporting the preservation and recognition of Piikani heritage. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree from the Old Sun Community College on September 22, 2021, and is also a recipient of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal (Alberta). He works with many museum collections within North America, Australia, the United Kingdom, and, most recently, Europe.



Co- Master of Ceremonies

## DAY 1- Piikani Archeology Conference

# DR ADREA LAWRENCE

IHKIINOPONOKAKKI (GENTLE ELK WOMAN)

Adrea Lawrence, Ph.D., is Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Montana. An education historian, she has studied American Indian histories and their corresponding education policy histories. She is increasingly interested in how people keep knowledge about the past and what that means for learning formally and informally. Her interest in traces of learning drives curiosity about how researchers approach their studies and how people have discerned meaning and figured out different ways to live in their worlds. She also serves as a professor with affiliate status in the Department of History. She earned a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Indiana University in 2006.



## Welcoming Address- Day 1

# JOHN MURRAY

INNIPOOTAH- (FLYING DOWN)

John Murray, Blackfeet Nation Preservation Officer and Director of the Tribal Historical Preservation Office (THPO), has served in many capacities advocating for Blackfeet cultural landscapes, sacred sites, and ancestral resources. For over 20 years, he has served as the THPO officer and advocated at both state and national levels, influencing NAGPRA and how it is implemented today. He has also worked to protect the Badger Two-Medicine sacred site for over 30 years, standing against major oil industry interests to keep it safe from exploitation. John is a respected elder of the Blackfoot Confederacy and has dedicated much of his work to the repatriation of sacred relatives held in museums, bringing them home to restore and heal the community.



## Conference Elder- Welcome and Piikani Land Acknowledgement

# JERRY POTTS

NAAMAAKAATOMI (GOING TO SHOOT)

Jerry Potts is a member of the Northern Piikani Nation. He retired from the Federal Government after 24 years as an Indigenous Liaison Advisor for Statistics Canada, working with all Indigenous groups, First Nations, Inuit and Metis. He promotes cross-cultural relations with the goal of breaking down barriers and enhancing respectful communication. He and his wife are past holders of the Piikani Long Time Thunder Pipe. He is a ceremonial elder for Thunder Medicine Pipes, Brave Dogs and Horn Society. A self-taught pipe-maker, he has made Ceremonial Pipes for all Blackfoot ceremonialists and the Blackfoot Confederacy for 50 years. His passion is working with the Piikani to develop a better understanding for archaeology sites, recognizing these sites as the Blackfoot footprint in Blackfoot Territory.



## Conference Elder- Setting of Conference purpose and goals

# TYSON RUNNING WOLF

STAMAAKSNIINA- (BUFFALO BULL CHIEF)

Tyson Running Wolf is a four-term Montana House Representative now running for the Montana Senate. As Chair of the Montana American Indian Caucus, he has passed legislation supporting tribal sovereignty and expanding access to healthcare, education, and business for all tribes statewide. He has championed justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People, advocated for law enforcement funding, and fought to protect sacred sites from predatory practices on tribal lands and waters. He has also fought for sustainable land use practices utilizing traditional knowledge. Tyson is CEO of Blackfeet Eco Knowledge, a nonprofit reconnecting land and people through holistic sustainability. He formerly served as Secretary of the Blackfeet Tribe and Tribal Business Council. He and his wife are practitioners and cultural leaders in their community of the Blackfeet Nation.



# DR LONA RUNNING WOLF

IHKIINOOKOOMII (GENTLE ROLLING THUNDER)

Dr. Lona Running Wolf is a 2026 Doctorate graduate from the University of Montana's Teaching and Learning program. Her primary research focuses on Indigenous Educational Systems—recovering original epistemological frameworks and reintegrating them into public and private education serving Indigenous students. Her secondary focus is literacy, advancing contemporary and traditional Indigenous modalities that support place-based, identity-driven, and holistic approaches encompassing language, culture, and storytelling. Lona and her husband, Tyson, co-founded Blackfeet Eco Knowledge, a nonprofit developing projects that restore these original systems towards healing through reconnection of Piikani culture, language, territory, and people.



**Presentation Title: Blackfeet Eco Knowledge- The Innovations of Piikani, from historical to contemporary**

This presentation will provide a snapshot of Blackfeet Eco Knowledge, whose mission is to reverse the impacts of historical trauma of Piikani environment, language, culture, and the people. This presentation will demonstrate how BEK is working in partnership towards using modern technologies to establish, reaffirm, and revitalize Nitsitiapii Culture by reconnecting Pookaaks to the story of innovation of Inii Drivelines and the gifts from the Pishkaan.

# TROY CROWSHOE

APIISAKKOOMAPII (COYOTE BOY)

Troy Crowshoe serves as Lead Researcher and Interim Manager at the Iron Shirt Culture and Heritage Society. Since October 2023, he has led the Blackfoot Language and Land Mapping Kiosk Project, dedicated to preserving Niitsi'powahsin, the Blackfoot Language, for future generations. He is also the lead organizer of the Piikani Archeology Conference. Troy's passion is to integrate Niitsi'powahsin into all aspects of his work knowing that it is the key component to Niisitapi identity, vital for ceremonies and the connection to all parts of life.



**Presentation Title: Iron Shirt Culture & Heritage Society (ISCHS) Non-Profit**

This presentation will provide an overview of the incredible work of the ISCHS aimed to protect, preserve and promote Piikanissini, the way of life of the Akaa Piikani (the ancient Piikani people).

# JOHN MURRAY

INNIIPOOTAH- (FLYING DOWN)

John Murray, Blackfeet Nation Preservation Officer and Director of the Tribal Historical Preservation Office (THPO), has served in many capacities advocating for Blackfeet cultural landscapes, sacred sites, and ancestral resources. For over 20 years, he has served as the THPO officer and advocated at both state and national levels, influencing NAGPRA and how it is implemented today. He has also worked to protect the Badger Two-Medicine sacred site for over 30 years, standing against major oil industry interests to keep it safe from exploitation. John is a respected elder of the Blackfoot Confederacy and has dedicated much of his work to the repatriation of sacred relatives held in museums, bringing them home to restore and heal the community.



# GHERI HALL

MIISAAMI KISOOM AKI (LONGTIME MOON WOMAN)

Co-director and deputy of compliance for the Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office. Gheri works to protect and advocate for Blackfeet cultural landscapes, sacred sites, and ancestral resources. As a ceremonial practitioner, she combines traditional cultural knowledge with advocacy to ensure Blackfeet voices remain central in decisions impacting tribal heritage and sacred places. Her work spans consultation with federal and state agencies, cultural resource management, and community education to strengthen the connection between past and future generations.



Presentation Title: Transfer of Ownership Agreement Signing

This presentation features the signing of NAGPRA agreements transferring ownership of ancestral remains and cultural materials to the Blackfeet Nation. It highlights the partnership between the University of Montana and the Blackfeet Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Office and affirms tribal sovereignty and ethical cultural stewardship. The signing represents a step toward bringing ancestors home and supporting healing through cultural continuity. It also strengthens long-term stewardship so future generations can uphold responsibility, care, and connection to these relatives and belongings.

# DR MARÍA NIEVES ZEDEÑO

PIKANIIAAKI- (BLACKFOOT WOMAN)

Dr Zedeño is a professor of Anthropology at The University of Arizona. She has conducted research among Native Americans across the country for 31 years, 22 of which she has worked with the Blackfeet Tribe and members of the Blackfoot Confederacy. She specializes in landscape archaeology and hunter-gatherer lifeways, past and present.



Presentation Title: Birth and Rebirth: Blackfoot Archaeology and Ethnogenesis

A contemporary view of deep-time archaeology in the Northwestern Plains and its significance to Blackfoot ethnogenesis, with special attention to current research in the Blackfeet Reservation and vicinity.

# SHANNON GILBERT

Shannon lives in Dillon with her husband, Mike, and southwest Montana is where she calls home. She's worked as an archaeologist for the last 30 years, and recently retired from the Bureau of Land Management after 15 years of service. She is now working part-time as a consultant for Mitzi Rossillon Consulting. She is enjoying new opportunities and projects, as well as spending more time with family and friends.



## Presentation Title: Blackfoot Heritage in the Madison River Valley

This presentation will discuss the ethnohistoric and archaeological study of Blackfoot heritage sites in the Madison River watershed that was done with the Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office and the University of Arizona Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology.

### GHERI HALL

MIISAAMI KISOOM AKI (LONGTIME MOON WOMAN)

Co-director and deputy of compliance for the Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office. Gheri works to protect and advocate for Blackfeet cultural landscapes, sacred sites, and ancestral resources. As a ceremonial practitioner, she combines traditional cultural knowledge with advocacy to ensure Blackfeet voices remain central in decisions impacting tribal heritage and sacred places. Her work spans consultation with federal and state agencies, cultural resource management, and community education to strengthen the connection between past and future generations.



## Blackfeet THPO High Altitude Surveys

High Altitude Survey Presentation highlights the work of the Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office in conducting cultural resource surveys and monitoring within high elevation and culturally sensitive landscapes across Blackfeet traditional territory. The presentation focuses on landscape-based identification methods, tribal cultural perspectives, preservation challenges, and the importance of protecting ancestral sites, traditional use areas, and culturally significant resources during modern development and compliance projects.

### DR HALEY OMEASOO FOUNDER- OHKOMI FORENSICS

ISSIMAANKI (A GIFT FROM ABOVE)

Dr. Haley Omeasoo is an enrolled member of the Hopi tribe and a descendant of the Amskapi Pikuni (Blackfeet) Tribe. She is a recent Ph.D. graduate of the University of Montana (UM) in the Forensic and Molecular Anthropology Program. Her research focuses on assisting Tribal agencies with cases concerning injustices against Indigenous people, such as NAGPRA cases, and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) crisis. Haley's motivation for such studies stems from real-life cases in and around her home community on the Blackfeet Reservation. In 2023, Dr. Omeasoo founded the nonprofit organization Ohkomi Forensics to provide forensic expertise and services that assist in resolving cold cases in Indian Country. Outside of academia and work, she is a wife and mother to two boys and enjoys beading and making traditional regalia.



## Presentation Title: Blackfeet DNA & Repatriation Efforts

This presentation explores the innovative use of contemporary genetic technology in conjunction with Traditional Blackfeet Knowledge to support the creation of the Blackfeet Repatriation DNA Database (BRDD). This initiative aims to identify ancestral remains and restore connections to the Amskapi Pikuni (Blackfeet) Tribe. We will discuss the importance of cultural heritage, the ethical considerations involved, and the collaborative efforts that bridge scientific advancement with traditional practices to honor and reclaim the identity of the Pikuni people.

## Evening Banquet Keynote Presentation

### KENT AYOUNGMAN

KAYIHTSIPIMIOHKITOPI- PAINT HORSE RIDER

Kent is a Ceremonial Knowledge Keeper and former Band Councilor of the Siksika Nation. He has collaborated closely with the University of Calgary's Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, contributing guidance to projects such as the Digitally Preserving Former Indian Residential Schools in Alberta initiative and the Siksika Archaeology Field School. His work bridges Indigenous ceremonial knowledge with academic research, supporting the preservation and recognition of Piikani heritage. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree from the Old Sun Community College on September 22, 2021, and is also a recipient of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal (Alberta). He works with many museum collections within North America, Australia, the United Kingdom, and, most recently, Europe.



#### Presentation Title- Traditional Blackfoot Women's Dresses

Maistoyi'kaniksi is the word that is used to describe the style of the dress Blackfoot women had been given to adorn themselves, this dates back to a time long before settlers had intruded Blackfoot country. The story of the maistoyi'kaniksi is one of the many explanations which ties the Blackfoot People to where they are meant to be. This Presentation will provide the history of the basic elements leading up to the trade era and to encourage the continuation of the creation of the Blackfoot woman's dress, maistoyi'kaniksi.

---

## Day 2- Piikani Archeology Conference

### LILY GLADSTONE

PIITAKII (EAGLE WOMAN)

Born in Montana, Gladstone was raised on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation and later near Seattle, WA. She graduated with high honors from the University of Montana in 2008 with a BFA in Acting/Directing and a minor in Native American Studies, and received an honorary doctorate from UM in 2024. Lily made history as the first Native American to win a Golden Globe (Best Actress, Drama) and a SAG Award for her role in Killers of the Flower Moon. She also earned a National Board of Review Best Actress honor and became the first Native American actress nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actress at the 2024 Oscars. Lily received a headdress transfer and was welcomed into the Nitsitapii Women's Standup Headdress society from her tribe, the Blackfoot Confederacy, given to honor her advocacy for tribal issues and for her people.



#### Welcoming Address- Day 2

# DR TREVOR PECK

*NIOKSKA-IIKIMAN (THREE FEATHERS)*

Trevor R. Peck has transitioned to consulting archaeology after almost two decades as the plains archaeologist at the Archaeological Survey, Ministry of Culture, with the government of Alberta. He received his MA from the University of Alberta and his PhD from the University of Calgary. The author of numerous articles and monographs, Dr. Peck's research interests include the prehistory of the northern plains, Indigenous archaeology, public archaeology, and archaeological theory.



Presentation Title: The Archaeological Identification of the Blackfoot

Ascribing ethnicity to archaeological cultures on the Northern Plains often rests on the coincidental distribution of projectile points and/or pottery and the known traditional territory of an Indigenous group. For the historic Blackfoot, the Old Women's phase - with its Cayley Series Points and Ethridge Ware pots - is the archaeological phenomenon with which it spatiotemporally coincides. Numerous archaeologists have worked decades to move beyond this correlation and increase the credible links between the historic Blackfoot and the archaeological record. Three phenomena - Type 4 medicine wheels, anthropomorphic boulder effigies, and fossil ammonites - are shown to link the historic Blackfoot to the precontact Old Women's Phase. Together, these artifacts and features indicate that the secular and ritual life of the Blackfoot extends back at least one thousand years on the Northern plains.

# DR LINDSAY AMUNDSEN-MEYER

Lindsay Amundsen-Meyer, Ph.D., is an archaeologist with nearly 20 years of experience working with heritage resources in Western Canada, in the academic, cultural resource management and government sectors. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Calgary. Lindsay has a special interest in fostering public awareness of Alberta's heritage and in engaging with Indigenous descendant communities. She strives to understand how archaeologists can create authentic partnerships with communities which lead to more meaningful interpretations of the past, as well as to engage with equity-deserving groups in understanding Western Canada's rich history.



Presentation Title: Set in Stone: Re-Examining Stone Feature Distribution and Form on the Northwestern Plains

This presentation will re-examine the form and distribution of stone cairns on the Northwestern Plains using examples from projects led by the authors. The form and distribution of cairns are related back to the Blackfoot cultural landscape and this bigger picture tied to a discussion of ethnicity in the archaeological record. We argue that many of these features were created by ancestral Blackfoot groups due to their placement on the landscape and their consistent association with important landmarks and named places in the Blackfoot culture landscape, refuting earlier arguments by Reeves and Kennedy (2017).

# SMOKE ELSER

Smoke Elser is a legendary outfitter and wilderness guide from Missoula, Montana, who owned and operated Wilderness Outfitters, leading pack trips into the Bob Marshall Wilderness for over five decades. A master horseman and storyteller, he introduced thousands to Montana's backcountry, earning recognition as one of the state's most iconic outdoorsmen. Smoke's connection to the Bob Marshall runs deeper than most. He logged thousands of miles along its rugged trails, navigating the Chinese Wall, the South Fork of the Flathead, and countless remote passes with his mule strings. His intimate knowledge of the terrain and history of the Bob makes him one of its most trusted stewards and a passionate advocate for keeping it wild and leaving no trace.



Presentation Title: The presence of Piikanii- Reflections of the Bob

Step into the Bob Marshall Wilderness and listen as Smoke carries us along the ridgelines, into the timber, and through the rugged places, through storytelling. He will share his lived knowledge and memory—inviting you to see the landscape not as scenery, but as a relative that holds teachings. As the journey unfolds, Smoke returns to the Basin Creek Fight Sign, a powerful account of Piikani presence depicted in the Bob.

# DR TARISSA SPOONHUNTER

NATO KSIKSSTAKI AKI

Dr. Tarissa Spoonhunter (Northern Arapaho and Blackfeet) is the Endowed Lilian & Christiana Haub Professor at the University of Wyoming Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources. She directs the High Plains American Indian Research Institute (HPAIRI), where she leads initiatives bridging Indigenous knowledge systems with Western science. Her current work centers on collaborative research with tribal nations, community outreach, workforce mentoring, and internship programs for Native students. Dr. Spoonhunter is a dedicated advocate for Indigenous sovereignty in environmental policy and natural resource management.



# JOYCE TATSEY SPOONHUNTER

(MANY BUNDLE HOLDER)

Joyce Tatsey Spoonhunter is a tribal historian elder of the Amaaskapi Pikuni. The Blackfoot confederacy recognized her for the work she has done through the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act through her name Many Bundle Holder in 1990s. She served as the Blackfeet Cultural Director for 12 years leading Repatriation where items of cultural patrimony—bundles, lodges—were put back into ceremony throughout the Confederacy in the US and Canada. As an educator, she has continued to revitalize Blackfeet Ways of knowing not only in the school system but in her community.



Presentation Title: Blackfoot territory before treaties landscape hunting, gathering and trading

This presentation will highlight Blackfoot Territory documents before the treaty period of 1851 to 1871. It will highlight Blackfoot presence along the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains throughout their Confederacy and connection with other nations.

# KENDALL EDMO

FOUNDER- OLD NORTH TRAIL PARTNERSHIP, LLC

KSA'A'HKO AKKII (EARTH WOMAN)

Kendall Edmo is a member of the Blackfeet Nation and the founder of Old North Trail Partnership LLC. She holds an M.S. in Earth Sciences from Montana State University (NSF GRFP Fellow), with a thesis on Traditional Blackfoot Knowledge, bison drive lines, and geospatial analysis. Kendall spent nearly a decade at the Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office, where she began her work in GIS and cultural landscape preservation. Through Old North Trail Partnership, she partners with Tribes to safeguard cultural landscapes, strengthening Tribal GIS capacity and leading Class III archaeological surveys.



Presentation Title: Traditional Blackfoot Knowledge, Bison Drivelines and GIS

This presentation examines broad-scale landscape use patterns among ancestral Blackfoot bison hunters on the Northwestern Plains through a GIS analysis of bison drive line networks in traditional Blackfoot territory. Findings show that drive lines were strategically positioned near water, woody vegetation, and broad river valley systems — material evidence of a sophisticated Blackfoot ecological knowledge system. Grounded in an Indigenous archaeological framework, the study draws on ethnohistoric narratives and traditional knowledge to contextualize the relationship between ancestral Blackfoot, bison, and the cultural landscape.

# DR KARLA BIRD

NATOOK KYIYAKI - (TWO BEAR WOMAN)

Karla Bird is a member of the Amskapi Piikani Nation (Blackfeet). She has graduated with a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership, with an emphasis in Higher Education at the University of Montana. She also received an M.A. in Counselor Education, as well as a B.A. in Psychology with a Research Emphasis/ Minor in Native American Studies. The topic of her doctoral dissertation was on educational persistence among American Indian graduate students. This research orientation was used to view students as sources of strength and resiliency, with tools and assets that help them persist and reach success in academe. Dr. Bird has served in various assets of education and has previously served as the President of Blackfeet Community College and currently serves in Tribal Outreach at the University of Montana.



Closing of Ceremonies- Reflections, Conference Summary

## Acknowledgments- Board Members, Conference Planning Committee and Staff Members

### Iron Shirt Culture and Heritage Society Non-Profit Board Members

Jerry Potts- Naamaakaakomi (Going to shoot)- Chairman

Velma Crowshoe - Misamaahkoyinimaaki (Long Time Medicine Pipe Women) Treasurer

Dustin Wolf - Ninnasokskinii (Chief Unbraided Hair) Board of Directors

Byron Jackson- litamyá'pi (Looks From Above) - Board of Directors

Doane Crowshoe- Isskoa'tsim (Took Back) - Board of Directors

Troy Crowshoe- Apiisisakoomapii (Coyote Boy)- Interim Manager

## **Blackfeet Eco Knowledge, Non-Profit Board Members & Staff**

Edward Kennedy- Amskapsaapoo (South Wind)- Chairman

John Murray - Inniitpoota (Flying Down)- Vice-Chair

Anna Armstrong- Naatoyiisaamiaki (Holy Headress Woman) - Treasurer

Charlene Burns- lipiikitstiakii (Far Offering Woman)- Board of Directors

Michael Gervais- Kiiskikpoo- Board of Directors

Tyson Running Wolf- M

Tedi Burns- Naotaaapsi'aaki (Holy Wolf Woman) - Cultural & Language Shield Keeper

Kelsie Burns- Ikkitstaki'akki (Many Offering Woman)- Financial and Marketing Specialist

Ray Yazzie- Matoomsaapii Poonokomitaa (First Charging Horse)- Buffalo Shield Keeper

Brantlee Fish- Ahkaasiimiakii (Many Bundle Woman)- Language & Environmental Shield Keeper

Wendy Bremner- Ahkiakuiniiman'aki (Many Pipes Woman)- Grant Specialist

## **Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO)**

John Murray - Inniitpoota (Flying Down)- THPO Director

Geri Hall- Miisaami Kisoom aki (Longtime Moon Woman)- Co-THPO Director & Deputy of Compliance

Terry Whitcomb - Natoyionista (Holy Calf)- Deputy of Compliance & NAGPRA Coordinator

Sissy Wells- Innaaki (Little Woman)- Administrative Assistant

Ryan Running Crane- Stamaaksatosii (Bull Medicine)- Shield Keeper/Guardian

Tyrell Fenner - Cultural Landscape Coordinator

Sequoyah Osborne- Natoyipitakii (Holy Eagle Woman)- Archivist

Darrel Hall- Spoomookitook (Holy Rock From Above)- Cultural