

Ozîja Baha

[oh-ZIN-jah-hhay bah-HAH]

BEAR HILL / SCOTT LAKE HILL



This is a story about the history of this place from the Îyârhe [ee-YAH-hhay]. Îyârhe means “mountain people.” We are a branch of the Sioux/Dakota/Lakota/Nakoda people, who are now called the Stoney Nakoda Nation.

Īsniyés [ish-niesh] — Thank you.

This story was shared by Chiniki Elders of the Stoney Nakoda Nation. The artwork and bench were provided by Stoney Nakoda Nation members, in a joint 2017 Canada 150 project of the Chiniki Elders Advisory Council and the Municipal District of Bighorn.

This initiative is made possible by the Community Fund for Canada's 150th, a collaboration between Banff Canmore Community Foundation, the Government of Canada, and extraordinary leaders from coast to coast to coast.



Canada

Top: Iliena Wildman,
Stoney Nakoda Artist.

Middle: Rolland Rollinmud,
Stoney Nakoda Artist.

Bottom: Summer Beaver,
Stoney Nakoda Youth, Grade 7, July 2017.

This is the entry point to the Stoney Nakoda Nation territory, which is the most northwest part of the Great Nakoda Sioux Nation.

The traditional Îyârhe territory covers a large area of southern Alberta, primarily along the foothills, mountains and the continental divide, extending in all directions for trade with others.

We, Îyârhe, consider all parts of nature to be sacred. Our name, Stoney, came from others who saw our people cooking with hot stones.

This place is called Ozîja Baha [oh-ZIN-jah-hhay bah-HAH] which means “Bear Hill.” Ozîja Baha is a sacred hill for the Stoney Nakoda because of the presence of grizzly, black and brown bears. These bears drink from the spring that runs from the top to the bottom of the hill, eating the plentiful supply of foods in the area. Ozîja Baha is a ceremonial place used to connect with the bears at their breeding grounds.

