

EUROPE / NORTH AMERICA

WRITING-ON-STONE / ÁÍSÍNAI'PI

CANADA

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN COMMENTS TO ICOMOS

WRITING-ON-STONE / ÁÍSÍNAI'PI (CANADA)

IUCN considered this cultural landscape property based on a desk review of the nomination and the contribution of one external desk reviewer not associated with the nomination to provide inputs to ICOMOS on the natural components of this property. The external desk review was also shared directly with ICOMOS to contribute to their detailed reflections on this nomination. The evaluation of the nomination for the World Heritage Committee will be finalised by ICOMOS.

The nominated property is a serial nomination consisting of three components, referenced as Áísínai'pi, Haffner Coulee, and Poverty Rock, located in Alberta, Canada. The total nominated area is of 1,106 ha with a buffer zone of 1,047 ha.

This nomination overlaps with an area of nature conservation significance. According to the nomination all three components of the nominated property are wholly encompassed within the boundaries of Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park (IUCN category II), which was first designated in 1957 (extended in 1962, 1964, 1968 and 1992). The area is designated under Alberta's Provincial Parks Act (RSA 2000, c. P-35). A portion of the nominated property is also designated as a Provincial Historic Resource under the Historical Resources Act (RSA 2000, c. H-9) (Map 10). The Áísínai'pi component of the nominated property and associated buffer zone are also designated as a National Historic Site of Canada.

The greatest concentration of rock art in the nominated property is found on the main rock art cliff in the Archaeological Preserve (within the Áísínai'pi component). In 1981, the level of legal protection was increased when most of the Archaeological Preserve was declared a Provincial Historic Resource". The nomination reports nature conservation values, including as "protected habitat for a wide range of prairie wildlife species, including a high concentration of rare plants and a number of species at risk."

The description of the nominated property mentions geology and post-glacial morphology, and a short description of habitat diversity and mention of some species of cultural importance. No overall species list is included, nor is there mention of threatened species.

The review IUCN received noted, amongst issues, concerns regarding the impacts of a nearby rodeo ground, which has reportedly led to damaging incidents affecting the nominated property in the past. The appropriateness of the location of this facility is questioned, and IUCN considers this matter should be considered further by ICOMOS through its evaluation and review process.