

Bow Valley Ranche Historical Society

Listen

Listening

Being in a state of awareness, present, open, and receptive to one's surroundings, to nature, to each other, to the external and internal environments, and to new beginnings.

Through the act of deep listening, profound (re)conciliation can occur.

“Listen” Garden

The “Listen” Garden is a place dedicated to listening, healing and creating a place of learning for future collaboration, growth and a shared path forward for all peoples.

The Bow Valley Ranch is the heart of Fish Creek Provincial Park.

The historic Hull/Burns Ranch house was slated for demolition by the province of Alberta in 1994. Recognizing the site's pivotal role as a landmark in Canadian pioneer history, Larry and Mitzie Wasyliv presented a proposal to the province for healing, caring and recognition of our rich culture embodied in the storied heritage of this significant place of gathering, celebration and early ranch-life in Alberta. Through 30 years of selfless stewardship, including the restoration and historical designation of the 1896 William Roper Hull Ranch House, Annies Café revitalization, development of the Formal and Native Gardens, Artisan Garden, Poet Tree Garden and Branded Patio, the BVR has evolved over time in representing and honouring this unique culturally significant site with determination and a focus on welcoming people from all walks of life.

The “Listen” Garden is located immediately south of this much-heralded development and represents

a natural extension of the spirit of preservation and restoration embodied at the “Bow Valley Ranch in Fish Creek Park” site. Larry Wasyliv and his dedicated Board of Directors, carrying on the work of he and his late wife Mitzie, are mindful stewards of cultural harmonization between the past, present and future; the land and the people; Indigenous and newcomer communities. The Garden will be a place where Native flora and fauna, Indigenous knowledge, and a spirit of harmonious personal and ecological balance come together where deep and meaningful (re)conciliation can flourish.

The “Listen” Garden, as a place of healing, will be part of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society’s “Seeds of Change” initiative and will be the first of its kind as a model for other such place-making across Canada.

Acknowledging that the Garden is on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples, we are guided in this effort by the wisdom of the Elders, Knowledge-Keepers, Guardians of the land and inherent connectivity of our lives, history and ecosystem. In addition to native plants, the garden will hold space for gathering, art, education, ceremony and the celebration of time-honoured traditions.

*“Listen to the wind, it talks. Listen to the silence, it speaks.
Listen to your heart, it knows.”*

— NATIVE AMERICAN PROVERB

Philosophy of Two-Eyed Seeing

“To learn to see from your one eye with the best or the strengths in the Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing... and learn to see from your other eye with the best of the strengths in the mainstream (Western) ways of knowing... but most importantly, learn to see with both of these eyes together, for the benefit of all.”

» PHILOSOPHY OF TWO-EYED SEEING,
SHARED BY MI'KMAQ ELDER, ALBERT MARSHALL

Geographic Significance

The “Listen” Garden holds special geographic and historic significance, as it is situated near the confluence of Fish (Wolf) Creek and the Bow River, and the traditional lands of the Treaty 7 Nations. Proximity to Tsuut’ina First Nation infuses the garden with a profound sense of place, meaning and history, honouring the deep connection that the Tsuut’ina people have with the Creator through the land.



*"We don't inherit the earth
from our ancestors,
we borrow it
from our children"*

» CHIEF SEATTLE

Garden Design and Significance

The “Listen” Garden, approximately 3 acres in size, has been designed with the understanding that gardens are dynamic, always growing, and changing. The design of the garden – how we move through the space – is itself a story. Three connected circles aligned from east to west are surrounded by native trees, bushes, grasses, herbs, and other plants used for traditional ceremonies and healing.

As the Sun rises, we enter the garden from the East and are guided to the Four Directions Sculpture, which reminds us that the land comes before the people.

Seven sunbeams lead into the Sacred Buffalo Circle, where we meet the prairie’s sacred animal, our first teacher. The Buffalo are of this place and restore this place, they fertilize the ground as they migrate. Spiritually and culturally significant, they have also fed, sheltered, and clothed people here since time immemorial. In the Buffalo sculpture, the father faces North and mother faces South. The Buffalo calf, symbol of the future, faces West. This circle relates to the sun, to activity, to the life force.

A pathway in the shape of the Métis Infinity sign connects the Buffalo circle to the second circle, Listening. The infinity sign captures the constantly flowing energy between masculine and feminine, sun and moon, active and receptive. This sign represents both unity and duality.

The Healing Garden is the heart of the “Listen” Garden. There is no separation between us and the land when it comes to healing. It is spiritually grounded in gratitude for all relations and relationships. The centre of this circle holds the medicine garden. Benches at the perimeter of this circle provide rest and a chance to listen, to contemplate, to reflect, and renew. Balancing Buffalo Circle, “Listen” is filled with feminine, receptive, moon energy.

As above, so below: our garden on earth is connected to the sun, moon, and stars.

The third circle is Gathering. This space is where people will gather, and where the male and female energies, where sun and moon, where action and listening, come together. This versatile space is for teaching and performance, and is where we will, for ceremonies, erect the teepee inscribed with the sun, moon, and the stars of the Seven Brothers. This is the place where stories of all people of the land will be shared, valuing and listening to the knowledge and significance of the land. Stories and verbal history are a most treasured and sacred part of the indigenous way of life.

At the Westernmost point of the Listening Garden is the Children’s Sculpture. In the shape of an arrow pointing west to the mountains, this sculpture will evoke and be dedicated to the strength and insightful innocence of our children as leaders of the future for generations to come.



*“What is life? it is the flash of a firefly
in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo
in the winter time. It is the little shadow
which runs across the grass and loses itself
in the Sunset.”*

ISAPO-MUXIKA (CROWFOOT) SIKSIKA CHIEF,
WARRIOR, PEACEMAKER

BLUE FLAX (LINUM LEWISII) INDIGENOUS PERENNIAL, SPREADS BY SEED; USED FOR MAKING ROPE,
AND IN TREATING EYE INFECTIONS, STOMACH DISORDERS, AND SWELLING

Vision for the Future

The “Listen” Garden is more than a space; it is a vision for a future where people and the land are deeply connected. It aims to inspire all who visit to engage in the ongoing collaborative process of reconciliation, to understand the importance of our natural environment, and to recognize the wisdom of the land’s guardians in fostering ecological balance.

As we walk through the garden, we are reminded of the cycles of life, the balance of nature, and the potential for renewal and growth. The garden is a living testament to the power of unity, respect, and understanding among diverse communities. It invites visitors to reflect on their relationship with the land and encourages them to take active steps towards healing and preserving our environment now and into the future.

By immersing ourselves in this serene and contemplative environment, we are encouraged to listen — to the whispers of the wind, the songs of the birds, and the stories of the plants. The “Listen” Garden serves as a gentle reminder that we are all part of the natural world, interconnected and interdependent.

In this sacred space, we find a sanctuary where we can reconnect with nature and each other. The garden offers a place for meditation, learning, and community gathering, promoting a sense of belonging and shared responsibility for the land. Through this shared experience, we can build a more harmonious and sustainable future for all peoples for generations to come.



Listen Garden

Sacred Buffalo Sculpture

Stories of the Land

Listen Healing Garden

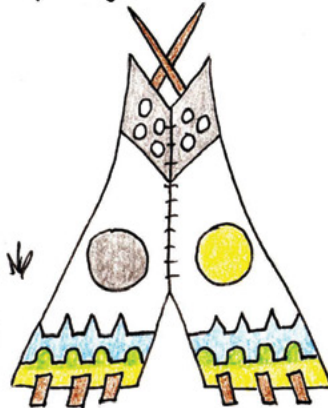
Breathe Listen Contemplate Reflect
Share Heal * (Re)conciliation

Gathering

Listen Experience Learn Understand * Open
Listen Teepee in circle for ceremony

-  Rocks
-  Picnic tables
-  Bike racks
-  Benches
-  Solitary Bee Sculptures
-  Native trees + grasses
-  Native bushes + plants
-  Saskatoon Berries

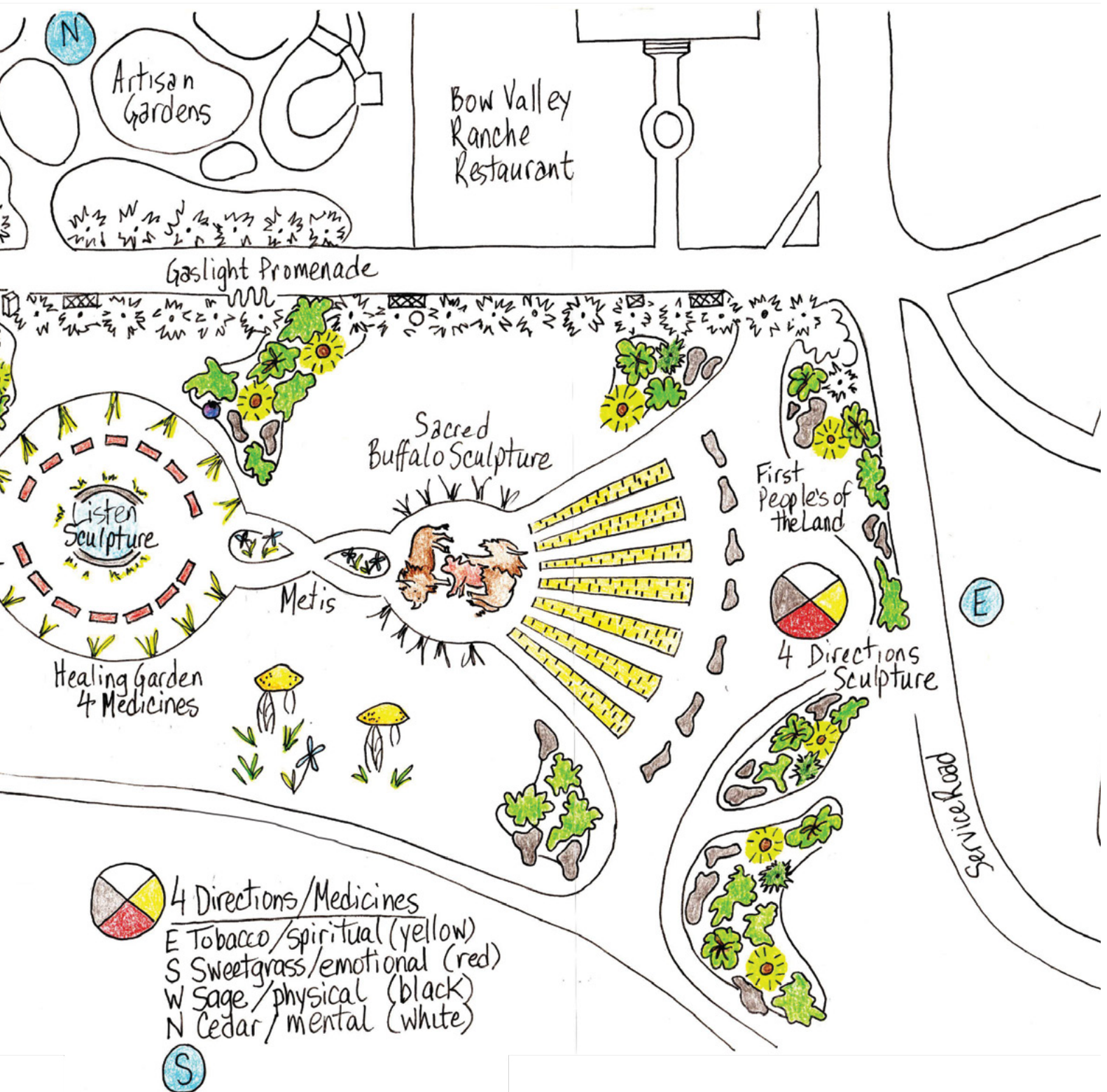
Listen Teepee
(design in development)



Treaty 7 Nations

Siksika
Kainai
Piikani
Tsuut'ina
Chiniki
Wesley
Bearspaw
Stoney
Nakoda

DRAWING BY NICOLE TRITTER



"There are many great voices but not all are human"

» NATIVE AMERICAN PROVERB

Listen Garden as a Community Builder

The “Listen” Garden is a sanctuary meant for all people, regardless of background, age, or lived experience. It is designed to be an inclusive space of informing, educating and sharing where everyone can find solace, inspiration, and a sense of belonging. The garden embraces our ever-evolving diversity and celebrates the rich tapestry of cultures and perspectives that make up our community.

From the moment you step into the “Listen” Garden, you are welcomed by an environment that is both inviting and reflective. Pathways are designed to be accessible to individuals of all abilities, ensuring that everyone can explore and enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the garden. Seating

areas and quiet nooks offer places for rest, conversation and contemplation, providing a peaceful retreat for those seeking a moment of respite from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

The garden’s mindful design encourages interaction and connection. Community events, workshops, and cultural celebrations will be welcomed in this vibrant space, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. It is a place where people can come together to learn, share, and grow, breaking down barriers and building bridges of appreciation and understanding.

Art installations and interpretive displays throughout the garden highlight the contributions, knowledge, stories and experiences of



indigenous communities, honouring their connection to the land. These elements serve as a reminder that we all have a role to play in preserving and protecting our environment as we live and breathe its natural abundance and timeless sustainability. By acknowledging and respecting the wisdom and traditions of Indigenous peoples and newcomers alike the garden fosters a spirit of reconciliation and mutual respect, relationships and reciprocity.

The “Listen” Garden is a living example of inclusivity and harmony. It is a place where differences are celebrated, where the voices of all people are heard, and where the collective wisdom of our diverse community is woven into the fabric of the landscape, and we

all learn to “Listen”. It is a testament to the belief that we are stronger together and that through unity and understanding, we can create a more just and sustainable world where we can all move forward in a way that will contribute to collective health of the human experience in this place we call home – as the Creator envisioned for all...

In the “Listen” Garden, every visitor is a valued member of a larger, interconnected community. Here, we are reminded that our actions today will shape the world of tomorrow, and that by coming together in this beautiful space, we can nurture a future where all are welcome and where everyone thrives.

Acknowledging Elders and Contributors

We acknowledge the guidance and wisdom of Indigenous Elders and community members who have helped shape this project. Their deep connection to the land and cultural knowledge has been integral in the creation of the “Listen” Garden.

Raymond ManyBears, Kaiyiitsapaomahka,
Moving On Air

Greta ManyBears. Aakaohksik’kitstakiyaakii,
Many Offering Women

Peter Weasel Moccasin, Miiniipoka,
Berry Child

The Honourable Lois E. Mitchell, CM AOE

The Royal Canadian Geographical Society

Alberta Environment and Parks

The Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Society

The Bow Valley Ranch Historical Society

Bow Valley Ranch Restaurants Inc.

Bow Valley Ranch Holding Inc.

JVR Landscape

The regional business community,
sound and visual artists

Listen

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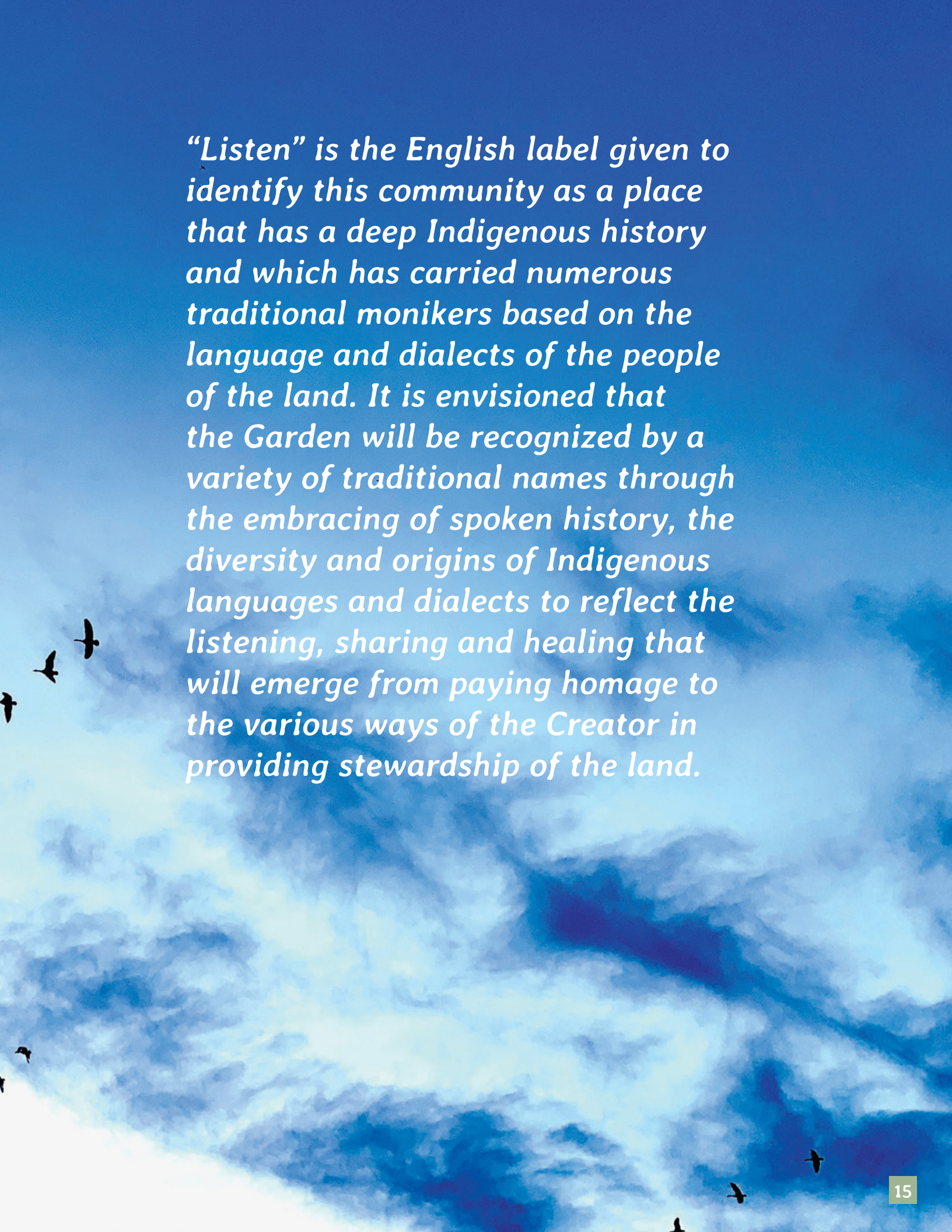
Larry Wasyliw, Piitai’pottaa, Soaring Eagle

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COVER PHOTO: BRYCE OLSEN | UNSPLASH
INSIDE PHOTOS: MORAG NORTHEY
PLANT DESCRIPTIONS: JOHN VAN ROESSEL

The background of the page is a photograph of a bright blue sky filled with soft, white clouds. Several birds are seen in flight, scattered across the sky, adding a sense of movement and nature to the scene.

“Listen” is the English label given to identify this community as a place that has a deep Indigenous history and which has carried numerous traditional monikers based on the language and dialects of the people of the land. It is envisioned that the Garden will be recognized by a variety of traditional names through the embracing of spoken history, the diversity and origins of Indigenous languages and dialects to reflect the listening, sharing and healing that will emerge from paying homage to the various ways of the Creator in providing stewardship of the land.

*seeds and soil
where bison once roamed
we grow hope
when all seems still
a soft stir of new beginnings*

MARY V | Bow Valley Ranch Historical Society
Poet Laureate





