



CELEBRATING HISTORY

The confluence of the Elbow and Bow Rivers, referred to as the "Elbow" by the Blackfoot people was an important wintering area for them. The east side of Scotsman Hill was one of the camping sites due to its sheltered location and trees, both scarce resources on the high plains. The buffalo would graze on the grassland in areas where the wind blew the snow away such as on Nose Hill and Scotsman's Hill with fescue grass being favoured by the herds providing food for the people here in the winter.

Some of the same plants that native people camping here up to the late 1800's would have seen and used are still here! On the west side of Scotsman's Hill, natural plant communities have some mauve crocus and yellow buffalo-bean that poke through the brown grass in the spring. Kinnickinick, a ground-hugging evergreen and juniper still grows on the hill, plants that were mixed with tobacco and smoked ceremonially in the past. Wolf-willow, the silver berries used as necklaces by the Blackfoot, still grows on the hill with saskatoon and chokecherry that were used in buffalo pemmican here as well.

Linking the past and the present through a native plant garden on the east side of the hill, with the Shining (Rocky) Mountains sweeping south to the horizon will complement photos of Ramsay dating to a time when Calgary had less than 10,000 people and the hill was the edge of town. Celebrating the important place Scotsman's Hill has in the history of Calgary, the place the city began and from where the first photo was taken in 1875 of the fort surrounded by a sweep of prairie is important today and will get more so into the future.



Ornamental Garden

Many residents have indicated a desire to incorporate an ornamental garden as a dedication to Ramsay's history. A sketch of how this could look is seen above.



Early Ramsay - University of Calgary Air Photo Archives

The Old North Trail

There was some concern that the Old North Trail may pass through our recreation area. In reading up on the Old North Trail, it refers to a series of routes used by the Blackfoot and other native people for raiding parties and trade. Historical references indicate the Old North Trail is now overlain by Macleod Trail and Spiller Road. Other branches of the Old North Trail also occurred further east, the most used crossing likely at Cluny (Blackfoot Crossing), where a rock ledge across the width of the Bow River allowed horses to more easily cross than most points upstream (Blackfoot Crossing Historical Site - 90 km east of Calgary).

The portion of Scotsman's Hill where the rink is located has been extensively re-graded up to 1.9 meters and then re-seeded in non-native grass species, removing all traces of any trails that existed in the prairie on the flanks and top of Scotsman's Hill (refer to the Geotechnical Report by Sabatini Earth Technologies Inc.).