

Our mission is: To engage the community through education and awareness to conserve a truly unique naturalized urban park.

Alberta Government Pledges \$81, 000, 000 to Restore Flood-Damaged Provincial Parks

On the morning of Wed. Oct 23 at the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre, the Honorable Dr. Richard Starke; Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation announced that over the next four years \$81, 000, 000 will be invested into provincial parks to restore the unprecedented damage caused by the June floods. "Our provincial parks provide Albertans and visitors from around the world with opportunities to connect with nature, to be active, have fun and relax. Restoring our provincial parks is an investment in our quality of life, in conserving our natural history and in our tourism industry," he said in a recent news release. Approximately \$16 million will be provided to Fish Creek Provincial Park, and the remaining funds will be used to repair campgrounds and infrastructure in Kananaskis Country and southern Alberta, which were heavily damaged.



Bridge 14 near McKenzie, photo by Cheryl Arpin

Dr. Starke was joined at the podium by Dan DeSantis of the Kananaskis Improvement District, the Honorable Dave Rodney, MLA for Calgary-Lougheed and Associate Minister of Health and Wellness, and Nic DeGama-Blachet; Friends of Fish Creek Executive Director. Nic spoke about the damage to Fish Creek and the Friends' flood-education programs, which provided people an opportunity to see the damage caused by the floods through minibus tours along the Bow River.

In Fish Creek the funds will be used to repair pathways and bridges, restore day-use areas, remove gargantuan debris piles and to restore community access points. The damage to and around Bridges 9, 14 and 15 have prevented pedestrian access to the park from the neighborhoods of Lake Bonavista, Douglasdale and McKenzie. Six Dedication Benches were also uprooted and displaced. The floods were disastrous in many ways, but this substantial contribution by the Provincial Government will go a long way in restoring these natural areas that Albertans cherish.

BECOME A

PARK PROTECTOR

Help change the face of conservation in your community and help benefit nature in Fish Creek Provincial Park!

As a Park Protector, you will be part of an extraordinary group that is helping the Friends tackle our most complex challenges and long-term projects.

In addition to receiving a valuable tax receipt and the newsletter *Voice of the Friends*, as a Park Protector, you will receive monthly updates on how your investment is making a substantial difference to Fish Creek Provincial Park.

To join our Park Protectors or for more information, please visit friendsoffishcreek.org/park-protector-signup

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THANK YOU CASINO VOLUNTEERS!

The Friends' Casino took place on Thursday and Friday, September 12 - 13 at the Deerfoot Inn & Casino. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the volunteers who worked in a variety of positions to help this event run smoothly. The Casino fundraiser provides essential revenue for the Friends to continue offering programs and services that engage the community and help protect and preserve Fish Creek Provincial Park

Special Thanks to: Olivier Aubin, Sheila Carter, Nicole Chaston, Joyce Crew and Neil Puffer, Jacqueline Deegan, Julie Figures and Rory Young, Doreen Fulton, Phil Greer, Bill Hiebert, Emmett Hogan and Megan Scott-Hogan, Bev Lane, Ann Lawson, Pat Lee, Colin McLelland, Wayne Meikle, Bob Morrin, Liz Nicolichuk, Arnold Nugent, Naomi Parker, Rob Pollard, Rick Robb, Harry Ripley, Stewart and Janice Scott, Robert and Cassandra Seymour, Graham and Johanne Smith, Don Stiles, Gene and Anne Swain, Syl Zacher and Jose Zapote.

Have Your Voice Heard ! Attend the AGM !

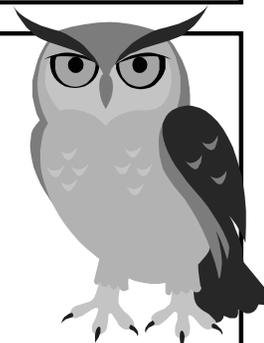
Wednesday, January 22, 2014 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre, Shannon Terrace, Fish Creek Provincial Park



It is because of our members, volunteers and donors that the Friends have accomplished so much. Come and have your voice heard and meet our board and staff at the Annual General Meeting. Please contact the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society if you would like to attend. Refreshments will be served. **Only members who have paid their 2013–2014 Membership dues are eligible to vote.**

BIRDING BASICS – WINTER BIRDING COURSE



Winter is a great time of the year for young people to connect with nature. They can do this by learning about the variety of bird species in Fish Creek Provincial Park and other natural areas in Calgary through the Friends of Fish Creek Winter Birding Course. Birds are now easier to see as the trees have shed their leaves, there are fewer species present and they often occur in large flocks.

Sign up with your child, grandchild, niece, nephew or any young person who enjoys experiencing nature and wildlife, and who would benefit from this valuable learning opportunity. Allow them to enrich their life enjoying the great outdoors during morning or afternoon weekend sessions. The fee for youth 16 years of age and under is only **\$5.00** with one registered adult.

As a fundraiser for the Friends of Fish Creek, these outings will be conducted by lifelong birder and naturalist Gus Yaki and other experienced birding instructors.

12-week course starts Monday, January 6, 2014.

Choose to come on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays at 9:15am, Saturdays at 9:00am or 1:15pm, or Sundays at 9:00am or 1:15pm. Reserve early as each group size is limited to 15 participants.

Fee for 12 outings: Adult Friends of Fish Creek Members: \$60.00, Adult Non-Members: \$100.00. Youth 16 years of age or younger with registered adult: \$5.00

To Register visit friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/birding-course email info@friendsoffishcreek.org or call 403-238-3841

Quiz Question

Who was responsible for the construction of the Ranch House at the Bow Valley Ranch in Fish Creek Provincial Park? **Bonus Question:** In what year was the Ranch House built?

Watershed Stewardship 2013

Winning the Battle against Invasives in Fish Creek

Katie Pearson,
Project and Programs Director, Friends of Fish Creek

Across this province, native grasslands are threatened by non-native plant species, also known as invasives, and stormwater retrofit ponds can help to introduce invasive species to ecosystems in Fish Creek Provincial Park.

As part of the Friends' Watershed Stewardship Project, volunteer Weed Whackers take part in weed pulls to remove invasive plants in the park, including those that enter the park in stormwater. These committed volunteers learn how to identify target species, understand the need for their removal, and focus on *winnable battles* such as the fight against yellow clematis and common burdock.

The Friends hosted 12 weed pulls in 2013 and Weed Whackers volunteers collectively removed over 600kg of invasive plant material from the park. Way to go Weed Whackers!

Thanks to the support of Land Stewardship Centre, the Watershed Stewardship Project expanded this year to include a Vegetation Monitoring Pilot Project. Volunteers with skills in plant identification, photography, GPS and GIS took part in various plant ID training opportunities, and worked together to monitor vegetation in natural grasslands and engineered wetlands in Lafarge Meadows. A summary of the project will soon be available on our website.



In addition to the funds we received from LSC through the Watershed Stewardship Grant Program, the Friends would like to acknowledge the support of St. Mary's University, The City of Calgary, Glenbow Ranch Park Foundation, Alberta Parks and Cows & Fish for providing a wide array of educational opportunities for our staff and volunteers.

Through this project, we are also creating an online plant photography database, available for the public to use as a tool to develop plant ID skills. Explore the Friends of Fish Creek Grasslands and Wetlands Photo Gallery at [flickr.com/photos/96561232@N04/sets/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/96561232@N04/sets/)

Want to help? Weed whacking is a great family activity that lets volunteers enjoy the outdoors, learn about plants and make a difference! Visit friendsoffishcreek.org/volunteer-category/get-active/ to see the list of weed pulls planned for 2014!



Calgary Field Naturalists' Society Outings



These free Birding seminars will take you to various natural areas in and around Calgary where you can explore the bird species found in these diverse environments, increase your bird knowledge and have fun. Willing to share your knowledge with others? Call the Calgary Field Naturalists' Society - 403-243-2248 to specify a date and location. For a complete list of upcoming outings, visit naturecalgary.com

Birding at North Glenmore Park - Friday, Nov. 30, 9:00am,
Meet in parking lot C just west of the Rowing Club, accessed from South end of Crowchild Tr. SW.
Leader, Penny Smith, 403-249-5997

Trail Care Update

Another Trail Care season has come to a close and the Friends would like to thank the Calgary Mountain Bike Alliance for their continued support, Alberta Parks and all the volunteers who helped out this year. On June 1, three volunteers helped to replace and repair 14 sign posts along the network between Shannon Terrace and Macleod Tr.



Volunteers near Bridge 4 , June 1.

Volunteers also came out on Aug. 10 to remove several unauthorized structures in a wooded area near Bebo Grove that were discovered by Park Watch Stewards in the Spring. On Sep. 14, the CMBA helped organize a successful trail day and 7 volunteers rerouted a section of trail beside the creek that had been severely undercut by the flooding. The creekside section was reclaimed and a new section 50m in length was developed to replace it. Thank you to everyone who helped this year and we hope to see you on the trails!

MEMBERSHIP SHOWS YOU CARE

The Friends would like to thank everyone who has renewed their commitment to preserving Fish Creek for the 2013-14 year. If you have not yet renewed your membership, now is the time to renew. You can even sign up a friend or family member who also enjoys visiting Fish Creek Provincial Park.

Members are what define the Friends of Fish Creek as an organization and make it possible for us to fulfill our mission. We deliver carefully targeted community stewardship events to preserve the ecological integrity of this park. Many of our programs receive minimal external funding but are made possible by members like you, donors, our skilled staff and dedicated volunteers.

Our goal of creating a community of informed park users is supported by programs like the Centennial High School Science 20 program, TD Learning Naturally, wellness clinics, minibus tours, birding courses, Speaker Series and watershed stewardship community outreach activities.

Membership fees are essential in helping us deliver quality programs to you. Friends of Fish Creek receive admission to Speaker Series presentations, a subscription to this newsletter and valuable discounts on courses and at local businesses. Your support is critical to ensure that we can continue to work with our volunteers to preserve the park for future generations to enjoy.



Please see page 6 for a Membership form or visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/friends-of-fish-creek-membership-signup

Alberta Parks PPA Series

Ammonites, Death Lodges, and Effigies: Exploring Plains Archaeology

Journey back in time to discover a world of Aboriginal cultures, rituals and the treasures left behind. Learn how leading scientists uncover the secrets of the past and map heritage in Southern Alberta. Join Trevor Peck as he explores the fascinating history of the Blackfoot through ammonites, death lodge medicine wheels and effigies.

Location: Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre, 13931 Woodpath Road SW
Date: Wed, Nov. 13, 2013 - 7:00 PM **Fee:** \$6/person payable at the door

For more information or to book your seats in advance, phone 403-297-7827 or email Shalane.Degruyter@gov.ab.ca



Syl and Mary Zacher – Helping Out on All Levels



The Friends are truly grateful for volunteers like Syl and Mary Zacher (*left*) who have been involved with the Friends since the floods of 2005 as members and volunteers. They have helped significantly over the past 8 years in a variety of programs and events. Part of the reason we have been able to continue

raising awareness within the community for the preservation of this park is because of dedicated volunteers like them.

Syl and Mary moved to the nearby neighbourhood of Parkland in 1977 and the first time they visited Fish Creek was on a cross-country ski trip in December of that year. Still active today, Syl enjoys cycling in the park as part of the Park Watch program. He informed us that his most enjoyable volunteer experience with the Friends has been riding his bike, interacting with the public and benefitting from physical activity. "I'd have to say weed pulling with a group has been my most enjoyable activity," Mary said, "because of the sense of accomplishment I receive at knowing I am helping to keep the park as natural as it can be."

Mary and Syl have been instrumental with helping get our messages out into the community and help both behind the scenes and in the public eye. They have helped with office-related tasks like mailing posters, the newsletter and other publications, set up for Speaker Series talks and worked the Casino, helped out with Park Watch, weed pulls and volunteered at community engagement events like Creekfest and A Taste of Spring.

Since they started visiting Fish Creek in the late seventies the most significant changes they have seen are both to the land and the waterways in the park.

These changes are partially due to a significant increase in demand put on the park by the expanding city of Calgary over the past 36 years. "There are now more trails and pathways," Syl said, "which have also been widened and paved, as well as new waste water settling ponds and changes in the course of the creek." Syl and Mary agreed that "mediating recent flood damage, and managing the increased number of users to the park, and the strain it will put on the environment" will be the biggest challenge faced by the park in years to come.

In addition to previously mentioned volunteer tasks, this past summer and fall Syl helped as one of the minibus driver volunteers who facilitated our Geology, Photography and Flood Education programs. These minibus tours are a great way to not only increase park users' knowledge about this area but also provide people who may have mobility issues with a means to enjoy the park.

When they are not volunteering, Syl and Mary enjoy being in the park, seeing the variety of wildlife and picnicking at Bebo Grove. They feel that the areas of Fish Creek that were first used by pioneers for ranching, and other industries that shaped the city, hold special meaning for them. "When we see remnants of old buildings, like the stone chimney at Bebo Grove, we often wonder what the lives of those people were like, who built it and who lived there?"

While Mary and Syl value everything the park has to offer, they would like to share a message to cyclists on the trails: We have had frightening experiences of people whizzing by on their bikes and not being aware they were coming. Please use your bell to warn others you are approaching from behind.

The Friends would like to sincerely thank Syl and Mary for all their help in the past, and we look forward to working with them in the new year and beyond.

Thank you to our Sponsors and Donors! Without your support our Programs and Events would not be possible!

Bobcat Level:



Deer Level:



Quiz Answer

William Roper Hull built the Ranch House in 1896 in the area now known as the Bow Valley Ranch in Fish Creek Provincial Park. In 1883, Hull and his brother John began raising and distributing cattle in the Calgary area. In 1887 he began supplying beef to the Canadian Pacific Railway and soon established butcher shops in Banff, Revelstoke, Canmore and other nearby towns. By 1891 he operated the largest and most successful slaughterhouse and butchering businesses in the Calgary area. He lived in the Ranch House and due to its Queen-Anne style construction and the success of his business, the house became a popular gathering spot for local and British aristocrats. Hull was known for hosting lavish parties during this era known as the Golden Age of Ranching. He sold the property to Pat Burns in 1902. In the early 1990s, the picturesque Ranch House was saved from demolition by The Ranche at Fish Creek Restoration Society, and was reborn as the popular Ranche Restaurant.

Biographi.ca/en/bio/hull_william_charles_james_roper_15E.html

2013 Executive

Chairman	Tom Jackman
Vice-Chairman	Emmett Hogan
Treasurer	Phil Greer
Secretary	Bob Morrin
Director at Large	Stewart Scott
Director at Large	Carole Steeves
Director at Large	Richard Link
Director at Large	Paulo DaCosta
Director at Large	Ainsley Grant
Park Liaison	Jennell Rempel

Staff

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403-238-3841

info@friendsoffishcreek.org

www.friendsoffishcreek.org

Name: _____ Phone: _____

email: _____

Address: _____ City and Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Work place (optional): _____

Membership Renewal New Member

I would like to make a donation

Park Protector Monthly Donor Plan: Monthly Contribution \$10.00 \$30.00 \$50.00

Membership: Individual \$35.00 Family \$45.00

Senior (+60 years of age) Individual \$25.00 Family \$30.00

Donation: \$25 \$50 \$100 Other: \$ ____

Please Fill out: Membership \$ ____ Donation \$ ____ Total \$ ____

To pay with a Credit Card, please use PayPal at www.friendsoffishcreek.org or donate on CanadaHelps.org

(Charitable Registration #891199747 RR0001)

NEWSLETTER: email send paper copy

Signature of donor or recipient: _____ Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$25.00 or more.

