

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

www.friendsoffishcreek.org

PO Box 2780 Stn M Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M7 403-238-3841

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Apr / May 2017

PARKS DAY & CREEKFEST



**EVENT
SPONSORSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES ARE
AVAILABLE! FOR
MORE INFO CONTACT
THE FRIENDS OF FISH
CREEK!**

**SATURDAY, JULY 15, 2017
11 AM - 4 PM BOW VALLEY RANCH
FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK**

Join us to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Canada and the 25th anniversary of the Friends of Fish Creek at Parks Day & Creekfest! This free one-day celebration of water will feature amazing musical acts like Alberta Parks Interpretive Theatre. Kids and families will learn about the importance of protecting our local watersheds and natural areas through interactive games and activities hosted by community-based organizations. Enjoy educational guided walks, a fly-fishing demo and wellness-based activities. Refreshments will be available for purchase by Great Events Catering! Are you a youth singer/songwriter and would like to perform at Parks Day & Creekfest? Contact the Friends of Fish Creek at info@friendsoffishcreek.org

Have you been to Parks Day & Creekfest? Like us at

www.facebook.com/CREEKFESTinFishCreek

and visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/event/creekfest
photo courtesy of Phil Smith

GREAT EVENTS
CATERING

Alberta Parks

Friends of Fish Creek
Provincial Park Society



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Fish Creek Speaker Series

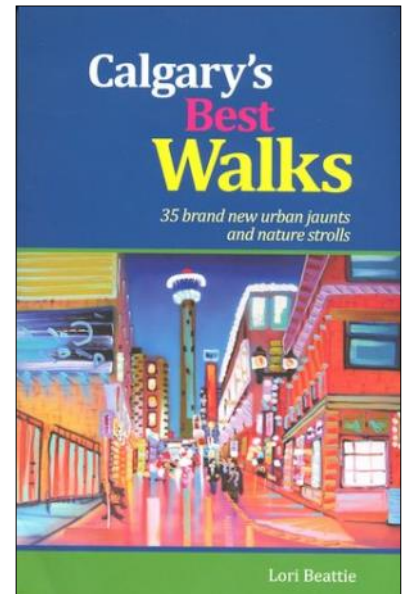
The Friends of Fish Creek Speaker Series program has been combined with the Alberta Parks and Protected Areas Slideshow series. Presentations will take place at the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre at Shannon Terrace in Fish Creek Provincial Park (13931 Woodpath Rd. SW, access via 130 Ave. SW and 37 St. SW.) Refreshments are available on a first come, first served basis. **Please park near washroom facility.**

Discover Calgary's Best Walks with author Lori Beattie

Thursday, April 20, 2017 7:00 pm — 8:00 pm

Presented by Lori Beattie, author of *Calgary's Best Walks*

Calgary is a walking city! Fresh crisp air, big blue skies, nature tucked into all quadrants, hidden stairways, over 500 km of paved pathways and wonderful independent cafés where you can stop and recharge. I think the best way to celebrate Canada's birthday is to introduce Calgarians to their wonderful city, to help them meet their neighbours, to help them experience the pleasure, the perspective, that comes from taking a walk. Join Lori for a visual presentation on the very best walks in Calgary, learn about Lori's Walk 150 initiative to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, and the Good Grief! Nature Walking through Grief and Loss walking program coming to Fish Creek Provincial Park in May. *See page 6 for more info.*



Beavers: Nature's Engineers, Troublesome Rodents, Iconic Canadian Symbol and So Much More

Thursday, May 18, 2017 7:00 pm — 8:30 pm

Presented by Cows and Fish; Shalane Friesen, Formal and Environmental

Educator Fish Creek Provincial Park; and Ryan Hannusch, Fish Creek Provincial Park Conservation Officer



We call them nature's engineers for good reason. No other species other than humans has the potential to change the landscape as much as beavers do. They are strong, intelligent, hard working and yes very busy. Their industrious nature means they their work frequently brings them into conflict with humans and our infrastructure. In this presentation, Cows and Fish and Alberta Parks will share some of the beaver's natural history and role they play in watershed resiliency, while also discussing some ways we can manage them that will reduce conflict and may help increase our tolerance of beavers. Whether you revere them, revile them, or remain neutral to them, beavers deserve respect and we continue to

adapt our parks and natural areas to co-exist in harmony with them. Join us on May 18 to learn about these fascinating creatures and integral members of the wildlife community. Photo courtesy of Anne Elliott

For more info stay tuned to
friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/speaker-series



Quiz Question

Where was the Friends of Fish Creek's home base in 1992 when this group was originally formed?

The correct answer will be announced in the next issue of Voice of the Friends.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF BRINGING THE PARK AND COMMUNITY TOGETHER!



The Friends of Fish Creek was formed in 1992 by a few passionate volunteers who recognized an opportunity to support Alberta Parks in their work in Fish Creek Provincial Park. In 1994 we became incorporated as a registered charity, which gave us the ability to pursue a wider variety of funding sources, and hire staff, in order to support our stewardship and education work. The Friends of Fish Creek has changed significantly over the past 25 years, and we are excited to have an opportunity to reflect on this journey and work together with our volunteers on a few new projects intended to commemorate this milestone.

In March, we met with a handful of volunteers to discuss five anniversary projects and plans to get them off the ground. Each project is being coordinated by a lead volunteer who will liaise with their team and our staff in bringing their project to fruition.

Community Research

Friends' staff and volunteers will be working closely with Data for Good, a Calgary-based Meetup group that brings together data scientists and non-profit organizations to create positive action through "data in the service of humanity." Working together, we will design a community research project intended to help assess and measure our impact in the community and provide direction for future programming.

Commemorative Signs

Volunteers are currently working on developing sign content and sourcing photos from our media library as we redesign the two information signs in front of the Cookhouse. We are grateful to Alberta Parks for funding this project and helping us to ensure that this public outreach strategy is accurate and remains relevant for years to come.

Cookhouse Improvements

This project team will be meeting in early April to begin planning how we can enhance our community outreach and donor recognition efforts at the Cookhouse with a few aesthetic and functional improvements.

Limited Edition Art Project

Local, internationally award winning artist, Jim Pescott, has been commissioned to create a unique painting of Fish Creek intended to symbolize our anniversary and represent our association with Fish Creek Provincial Park.

Adopt-a-Tree Program

This year will see us kick off the first year of a longer-term tree planting program as we work to address the aging cohort of poplar trees in the park through successive years of plantings. Our volunteers are working on background research while the Friends collaborate with Alberta Parks and Cows and Fish on ecological considerations integral to its success. Mid-year we plan to have trees available for symbolic adoption, allowing community members to get involved in our overarching watershed stewardship work.

Over the coming months we will provide updates on our 25th Anniversary Project, and are happy to answer any questions you might have. Special thanks to Alberta Parks and Fish Creek Provincial Park staff, and to all of the 25th Anniversary volunteer team members!

Photo Courtesy of Rick Robinson





CAPTURE NATURE

3RD ANNUAL FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK PHOTOGRAPHY
CONTEST RUNS APRIL 1 - JULY 31, 2017



Show us your best park pics for a chance to win amazing prizes from Vistek! A maximum of 10 photo images can be submitted by each participant, across four different categories:

- Wildlife: any wild animal will do
- Macro: close up shots of anything you like
- Black and White: for a different perspective!
- Landscape: water, trees, sunset, fields of flowers, the whole park is a beautiful landscape!

All photos must be taken in Fish Creek Provincial Park.

For more information or to register visit friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/capturenature

Photos: squirrel and Woodpecker, Larry Doucet; forest, Rick Robinson; dragonfly, Finlay Jones



Park Watch 2017

PARK WATCH PILOT PROJECT HELPS PROTECT WATERSHEDS

Park Watch is the Friends' longest running program and an important avenue for engaging volunteers and park users on issues related to the health, cleanliness and safety of Fish Creek Provincial Park. One of the most significant issues our Park Watch Stewards have reported in recent years is that of litter – specifically cigarette butts littering the day-use areas and around washroom facilities. Not only does this create an unsightly mess, the possibility of a wildfire is significant if butts aren't properly disposed of. This issue has been ongoing, but through the creative efforts of one Park Watch team, we just may have a solution!

Long-time Stewards, Carl and Liz Johnson, found a unique product in the pocket ashtray made by Braingarden out of Vernon, BC. Through some directed fundraising efforts, this team managed to secure the



funds necessary for us to customize 1000 ashtrays that our Stewards will hand out to park users this year in an attempt to educate people about the issue at hand and clean up the park at the same time. The use of these pocket ashtrays has been shown to decrease smoking-related litter by up to 70% in various other initiatives; our hope is that smokers will

take a pocket ashtray with them, allowing them to transport the filters home – or to a park garbage bin – disposing of them properly in an act of positive stewardship. We're very excited about this new addition to Park Watch, so keep an eye out for our volunteer Stewards on shift between May 1 and October 31 and ask them for a pocket ashtray if you need one!

Our thanks to Chester and Murielle Nagy for donating the funds for this pilot project (*see their interview on page 5*)

Volunteers In Profile

MURIELLE AND CHESTER NAGY

DEDICATED TO A SUSTAINABLE PARK ENVIRONMENT

Murielle and Chester have been members of the Friends of Fish Creek since 2010 and Park Watch Stewards since 2012. You may have seen them patrolling the west end of the park with their dog Shadow (pictured here.) Their love of Fish Creek spans almost 20 years and began when they moved to Evergreen in 1999. In addition to volunteering for Park Watch and special events, they donate and help raise funds for Park Watch, one of the Friends' most essential and longest running volunteer programs. Murielle and Chester recently took some time to share their experiences in Fish Creek Provincial Park.



"When we purchased our home, Fish Creek Provincial Park was literally our back yard, with a gate in between of course. The serenity of the park provided all that we needed to start exploring and enjoying family walks." Murielle said, "Our two young children decided a few years later that we needed a new puppy. We lovingly welcomed our Labrador retriever, Shadow, into our lives. The park provided endless educational opportunities while exploring and hiking on the weekends with the children, and of course, Shadow."

Originally from Belgium, Murielle immigrated to Calgary in the 1960s, while Chester grew up in the Inglewood area. "They say that Fish Creek Provincial Park is a hidden jewel, and it certainly is!" he said "It is very hard to believe that this beautiful urban park is in the heart of the city. When visiting the park you don't really realize that you are in a city!"

Murielle said, "When our girls went away to college, Chester and I ensured that Shadow received daily and evening walks. Our favorite walks were on weekends to the beaver ponds near Marshall Springs. On hot sunny days we would stand very still and watch the beavers. We frequently took family visitors from afar to

witness for themselves. There were many pencil thin trees in the area as the beavers continued to work to dam up the creek like they do."

"I am always looking for opportunities to give back to the community by volunteering and helping where I can," she said, "Chester has been a business owner in the energy manufacturing industry for over 30 years and is an

avid cyclist throughout the year. His favorite trips are the cycle paths in Fish Creek, with his helmet webcam capturing his early morning park critter friends." He added "I don't believe there was a time when we visited the park that we didn't see some sort of wildlife. Over the years we have seen coyotes, deer, beavers, as well as owls and other birds throughout all of the seasons."

"On a hot summer day during a jog I was convinced I caught a glimpse of a black bear on the path and turned back real quick," Chester said, "The following day the warning signs were out and we decided to stay in the meadow for the next few days."

Murielle and Chester remember well the floods of 2005, "Many bridges and pathways were washed away and destroyed, and we had become used to walking the paths and utilizing the park. The amazing work that has been done over the years to restore the park with numerous volunteers giving their time is a wonderful story!"

"As the park continues to be enjoyed by many visitors, we must be mindful to take care of it and ensure we do not litter," they said, "There are many ways to enjoy the park, like walking, cycling, having picnics, just to name a few. It's important for park visitors to obey park signs for staying on marked pathways, keeping pets on leash, and being respectful of nature and wildlife so that we can all continue to enjoy this park for many years ahead!"

*Would you like to nominate yourself or someone you know for the Volunteer In Profile for an upcoming issue?
Call 403-238-3841 or email info@friendsoffishcreek.org*



GOOD GRIEF! NATURE WALKING THROUGH GRIEF AND LOSS

Monday Nights, May 8 - June 26, 2017 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Meet at the Bow Valley Ranch, Fish Creek Provincial Park

8 week program is only \$25.00 and includes *Calgary's Best Walks* by Lorrie Beattie

In partnership with Mount Royal University and Alberta Parks, the Friends will offer this program for those experiencing grief and loss. Good Grief provides the opportunity to take part in a series of gentle, accessible guided walks through nature, allowing you to observe, to chat, to enjoy fresh air and the natural world with others who are walking a shared path. *See page 2 for info on Lori's Fish Creek Speaker Series presentation on April 20.* For more info or to register visit friendsoffishcreek.org/event/good-grief

INTRODUCING YO-QI: A WELLNESS EXPERIENCE

The Friends' staff take every opportunity to improve our programs based on the ideas and feedback we receive from the public and our volunteers. When we were approached by our Wellness Program instructors about the possibility of extending the yoga and Qi Gong season, we jumped at the chance!



We are excited to announce that 2017 will provide people with an opportunity to participate in our Yo-Qi: A Wellness Experience pilot project as we assess the level of interest there is for our Wellness Program continuing throughout the year.

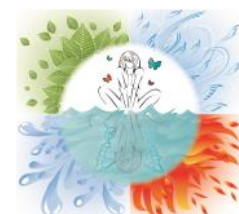
"Yo-Qi" is a combination of Yoga and Qi Gong – and each session will have a different wellness-focused theme. Sessions will be lead by Diane Smith, Spring Forest Qi Gong Certified Instructor, and Yoga and Guided Meditation Instructors Gwen Draude of Birds of a Feather and Naomi Parker of Elemental Wellness.

Sessions will be held indoors at the Environmental Learning Centre at Shannon Terrace from 7:00 - 8:00 pm on Thursday evenings:

April 20 – Connecting to Earth

May 18 – Gratitude for Mother (your own or Mother Earth!)

To register and for more information visit friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/wellness-clinics



Anniversary Bricks are Going Fast!

25TH ANNIVERSARY LEGACY BRICK PATHWAY

2017 sees us celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Friends of Fish Creek, and we will be replacing the pathway to the front door of the Cookhouse with a special brick pathway consisting of bricks bearing dedications or messages from donors.

This is a great opportunity to leave a legacy in the park for a loved one or to show support for the work the Friends do toward the sustainability and enjoyment of Fish Creek Provincial Park.

Only 248 bricks available. Get yours today!

\$250.00 / brick and you will receive a tax receipt.

For more information contact the Friends or visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/brick

ONLINE STORE NOW OPEN!

The Friends have amazing original art by local artists posted on our website for purchase, as well as t-shirts and the new books *Uncharted: An Inspirational Novel* by Graeme Connell and *Calgary's Best Walks* by Lorrie Beattie (see page 2 for more info.) Items also include beautiful framed photos by Robin Read and Ken Pride (pictured here,) a painting by Sheila Schaetzle, a cross-stitch by Wayne Meikle, a beautiful handmade quilt by Marie Beth Cowie and much more! Drop by the Cookhouse or visit friendsoffishcreek.org/store



Spring Birding Course



Increase Your Knowledge of Fascinating Bird Species as They Return from Their Wintering Grounds and See Them in Their Local Habitats!

Spring Birding Course Runs April 3 - July 2

Whether you are a beginner, intermediate or expert, this course will help you to identify the newly arriving migrant birds, and allow you to become familiar with the valuable bird habitat near you. The course will take place outdoors in Fish Creek Provincial Park and other natural areas within Calgary. As a fundraiser for the Friends of Fish Creek, these courses will once again be conducted by volunteer instructor and lifelong naturalist Gus Yaki and other knowledgeable and experienced volunteer instructors.

Course offered at 9:15 am on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays;

Saturdays at 9:00 am, and Sundays at 7:30 am, 9:00 am or 1:15 pm

Choose to come 1 or 2 Days / Week. Each outing is approx. 2.5 - 3 hrs in duration.

Fees for Course: 1 day / week \$60 for Friends Members, \$100 for Non-Members,
\$5 for Youth with Registered Adult, 2 days / week \$100 for Friends Members

Registration Required. To Register or for more info:

www.friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/birding-course

(Eastern Kingbirds photo courtesy of Tony Leprieur)

EVERYONE BELONGS OUTSIDE - INCLUSION SHOWCASE

Saturday, April 22, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre, Shannon Terrace

Join Alberta Parks and Prospect Human Services in celebrating inclusion and improving accessibility to the outdoors! Come on down and meet our exhibitors who provide adaptive and inclusive programming. You can also enjoy fun activities including adaptive equipment demos, forest therapy sessions, accessible yoga, art in the park, and much more! For more information about this free event please contact Mandi.Parkin@prospectnow.ca



Nature Calgary 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

Sunday, April 30, 2017 9:00 am Birding at Frank Lake, Meet at the first parking lot in the Glennfield area of east Fish Creek, via Bannister Rd. Bring lunch. Leader Tony Timmons, 403-256-0754.

TD Learning Naturally Needs Your Support!



SCORE AN ACE FOR CALGARY KIDS! SUPPORT OUTDOOR EDUCATION IN FISH CREEK THROUGH BIRDIES FOR KIDS PRESENTED BY ALTALINK!



PRESENTED BY **ALTALINK**
A BELL/SHAW NETWORK ENERGY COMPANY

Birdies for Kids presented by Altalink provides a truly remarkable opportunity for the Friends of Fish Creek to support the TD Learning Naturally program, but we need your help! Many of the students who visit the park through their TD Learning Naturally field trip

experience the wonders of this cherished natural area for the first time. These students attend schools that do not have the means to provide a field trip to the park, and may be from families that are new to Canada. The TD Learning Naturally program is essential for encouraging a love and respect for nature and teaching the children about the variety of plant and animal life found not only in Fish Creek but also in this unique part of the world. It costs only \$10 to provide one unforgettable day of learning in Fish Creek for a student who otherwise may not have the opportunity. Any amount you donate through BFK will be matched by up to 50% and go towards our goal of raising \$10,000 to bring 1000 elementary school students to Fish Creek Provincial Park.

The Friends are truly grateful to the Patron Group, Shaw Communications, AltaLink and the Shaw Charity Classic foundation for welcoming the Friends' TD Learning Naturally as one of 124 local youth focused

charities to participate in Birdies for Kids for the third year in a row. This program has immense potential and we encourage you to donate and speak to your employer about making a tax-deductible donation. Birdies for Kids is just one aspect of the Shaw Charity Classic Golf Tournament held every year at the Canyon Meadows Golf and Country Club. The biggest names in professional golf from around the globe compete in this world-renowned championship. The tournament will run August 30 – September 3 this year but you can donate now! Please talk to your friends, family, co-workers and employers about donating.



The Friends of Fish Creek thank you in advance for generously supporting this essential program. For more information, please contact the Friends of Fish Creek or visit friendsoffishcreek.org/birdies

Thank You Supporters!

Bobcat Level:TD Friends of the
Environment
Foundation**Beaver Level:****Maria K. Eriksen and
Harold Hanen Fund at
the Calgary Foundation**

QUIZ ANSWER - FEB / MARCH ISSUE

In 2016, which bird was declared Canada's National Bird by the Royal Canadian Geographic Society?

The Grey Jay, or Whiskey Jack, was named the official bird of Canada. About the same size as a Blue Jay, but with a smooth head and gray and white plumage, this bird can be found in boreal forests throughout this country at all times of the year. The Gray Jay lives almost exclusively in Canada, but may have followed the Rocky Mountains as far south as New Mexico and Arizona. It is also known as the Camp Robber and enjoys being around the easy food supply provided by campers and hikers. The Gray Jay's range covers most of this country aside from the most northern regions, and more arid southern areas of Alberta and Saskatchewan. To see a Gray Jay in Fish Creek would be unlikely, but one does not have to venture far into the mountains to see these birds. [www.canadiangeographic.ca/Birds of Alberta, Fisher](http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/Birds_of_Alberta_Fisher)

2017 Executive

Chairman	Tom Jackman
Vice-Chairman	David Mitchell
Treasurer	Phil Greer
Secretary	Stewart Scott
Director at Large	Bob Morrin
Director at Large	Richard Link
Director at Large	Henry Villanueva
Director at Large	Linda Dudar
Director at Large	Lori Mainland
Director at Large	Robert Bell
Director at Large	Kari Horn
Park Liaison	Jennell Rempel

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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

☐ Please send me information about leaving a gift in my will

☐ 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 online: www.friendsoffishcreek.org/friends-of-fish-creek-membership-signup or donate on CanadaHelps.org

(Charitable Registration #891199747 RR0001)

NEWSLETTER: ☐ email ☐ send paper copy

Signature of donor or member: _____

Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$10.00 or more or if requested.

**FRIENDS OF
FISH CREEK
MEMBERSHIP
MAKES A
GREAT GIFT!**