

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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WINTER BIRDING COURSE

January 7 - March 31, 2019

Learn about the variety of bird species in Fish Creek Provincial Park and other natural areas within Calgary through the Friends of Fish Creek Winter Birding Course. In the winter months, birds are much easier to see since the deciduous trees have shed their leaves, there are fewer species present and they often occur in flocks. "In fact, there may well be more individual birds within Calgary during the winter than in the summer months," said lifelong naturalist Gus Yaki, who, along with other experienced birding instructors, conducts these outings as a fundraiser for the Friends of Fish Creek.

Registration Required and fees apply. \$60 for Friends members and \$100 for non-members. \$5 for a youth 16 or younger with a registered adult.

To register or for course times, please visit
www.friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/birding-course



The Wild Bird Store is Mobile!

Check out the WBS Birdseed Truck near you to pick up bird feeders and houses, bird baths, accessories, birdseed and much more! You can even order items through WBS website and pick them up from the truck. Text your order to 403-701-4571 or visit www.wildbirdstore.ca/birdseed-truck

South Location - Thursdays, 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm, Deer Park United Church, 77 Deerpoint Rd SE

North Location - Wednesdays, 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm, The Crowfoot Arena (Next to the YMCA) East parking lot

Please restrict the use bird seed to feeders on your property and do not feed birds in Fish Creek Provincial Park.



Also in this Issue:

Page 2: Fish Creek Speaker Series
Quiz Question

Page 3: The Jobber's House

Page 4: Anniversary Bricks
Giving Tuesday

Page 5: Volunteers In Profile

Page 6: Annual General Meeting

Page 7: A Taste of Autumn

Page 8: Capture Nature Photography Contest

Page 9: Summer Update

Page 10: ReWilding Through Restoration

Page 11: Fish Creek Update

Page 12: Fish Creek Bird Blind

Page 13: Membership Renewal

Page 14: Supporters, Quiz Answer, 2018 Executive
Autumn Colour, Nature Calgary

FISH CREEK SPEAKER SERIES

Starting in January 2019, the Fish Creek Speaker Series admission fee will increase from \$5.00 to \$10.00. This increase will help to alleviate some of the costs associated with running the program and encourage membership. Through the Fish Creek Speaker Series program, professionals from a variety of fields and areas of expertise share their knowledge and experiences with community members. These presentations take place from January - June and then September - November. Friends of Fish Creek members will continue to receive free admission to these fascinating and informative presentations.

The Friends of Fish Creek Speaker 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.) Presentations are free to Friends of Fish Creek members and \$5 for non-members, for October and November. Refreshments are available on a first come, first served basis. **Please park near washroom facility.**

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park

Thursday, October 25, 2018 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Presented by Julie MacDougall, Senior Parks Planner – South Region Alberta Environment and Parks

This presentation will cover the rationale for the establishment of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park, an overview of the conservation, wildlife and ecological values of the area and the unique opportunities that we have to work with Indigenous Peoples and to establish new recreational opportunities. To register please visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/event/castle

East Coast Exploration - Newfoundland

Thursday, November 22, 2018 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Presented by Julia Millen, Acting Community & Partner Relations Team Lead - Alberta Environment and Parks



When the sun rises at the eastern edge of North America, on one of the “four corners of the world”, the first land to see the break of day is Newfoundland. It is one of the best places to see and appreciate nature in all its glory. Dramatic coastlines, sweeping barrens, boreal forests, tuckamore, and ancient rock formations make up the natural, wild beauty of this place. The living landscape holds its own wonder – teeming with seabirds, moose, caribou, and whales. Mix that in with the colourful history and culture

for an experience that will never be forgotten. Julia has made it a quest to visit as many of Canada’s National Parks and National Historic Sites as she can. This past summer she added several to her list, including backpacking the Long Range Traverse in Gros Morne National Park, and will share her adventures on November 22.

Registration Required. To register please visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/event/explore

For more info on upcoming presentations stay tuned to www.friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/speaker-series



QUIZ QUESTION

Which bird species is featured on page 1 of this newsletter? Photo courtesy of Shirley Otway
The correct answer will be announced in the next issue of Voice of the Friends.

THE JOBBER'S HOUSE AT THE BOW VALLEY RANCH

RENOVATION TO SUPPORT FRIENDS' GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Nic Blanchet

Friends of Fish Creek Executive Director

The 100 year old house that stands next to our office in Fish Creek Provincial Park has remained empty since the late 1950s. This is the Jobber's House. This building was part of the ranch upgrades carried out by Patrick Burns in 1918, and is one of only three buildings remaining from the Burns period, a significant time for the ranching industry in Canada.



This house has been part of the charm of Fish Creek Provincial Park for three generations and community members constantly tell us how much the building means to them. The Friends of Fish Creek is in growth mode and we require additional space to develop our social enterprise programs, add staff and respond to the demand for our programs and support to the community and other non profits.

We are proposing to take over and renovate and repurpose the Jobber's House to support our growth, further support our community, provide a facility to serve as a hub for less established non-profit groups and ensure the survival of this piece of Calgary's history.

In order to raise funds for the actual upgrades and repurposing we need a plan from a qualified individual supporting the feasibility of the project and outlining the steps to complete it and a cost estimate.

After some discussions in the early part of the year and support from local MLAs Richard Gotfried and Graham Sucha we are very happy to announce that the Alberta

Real Estate Foundation has provided a grant to cover the full cost of the feasibility study and project plan. Their generous contribution of \$44,000 will go a long way in getting this project off the ground.

The plan will take around three months to complete, once we have this, we will

be able to commence fundraising for the actual construction work. After discussions with supporters and potential funders, we estimate the major fundraising will take around a year to complete.

The current idea is to convert the upstairs to one large versatile room to support many functions, the downstairs will contain a smaller meeting space and possibly office space, the basement will contain utilities, washroom and office space. The exterior will be renovated but will maintain the same appearance. We are considering adding a classroom to the rear of the building to increase its utility; this will be constructed in keeping with the current exterior.

The work will include bringing the building up to current code and accessibility requirements and using energy and water conserving technologies. Our sincere thanks to the AREF for supporting the Jobber's House Renovation and the Friends look forward to sharing our progress on this exciting project.

For more info or to contribute and support this project please visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/jhouse



PHASE 3 BRICKS ARE SELLING FAST!

With the holidays fast approaching, an Anniversary Brick would make an amazing gift for anyone on your list who enjoys visiting Fish Creek !

Become part of history and show your support for this cherished natural area by dedicating a brick today. All funds raised through this program will help us to realize our vision of a sustainable Fish Creek Provincial Park that improves the lives of current and future generations. There are only 80 anniversary bricks available to be installed in front of the Friends' office at the Cookhouse so get yours today. Bricks are only \$250 each and you will receive a valuable tax receipt for your donation. Thank you to everyone who previously dedicated an Anniversary Brick. For more information contact the Friends or visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/brick

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27 IS GIVING TUESDAY!

PLEASE GIVE IN SUPPORT OF THE JOBBER'S HOUSE!

In recent years the international movement known as Giving Tuesday has been gaining momentum and has the potential to be especially powerful in this city. The Friends of Fish Creek have partnered with Canada Helps once again to make donating easier than ever! This year we are focusing our Giving Tuesday program on the Jobber's House renovation and revitalization project (*see previous page for more information*). We are planning to turn

GivingTuesday



November 27th 2018

the Jobber's House at the Bow Valley Ranch into a truly useful space that will benefit the park and community members for generations to come. By utilizing this building, we can improve, enhance and expand our educational activities, such as the TD Learning Naturally program, host community outreach activities, meetings, and year-round wellness activities, and realize countless other possibilities. This Giving Tuesday, we invite you to help support the Jobber's House conservation project here in Fish Creek Provincial Park. For more info or to donate visit www.givingtuesday.ca/partners/friends-of-fish-creek1

VOLUNTEERS IN PROFILE

ROSE, WILL, KAREN AND MICHAEL RATLIFF - WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PARK

The Ratliffe family has been volunteering with the Friends of Fish Creek since 2015 and contributed to almost all of our programs and events over the past 3 years. Rose, Will, Karen and Michael have each given their time and efforts to volunteering with some or all of the following programs -



Park Watch, flood debris mapping and clean ups, Riparian Restoration, Monitoring and Assessment, Tree Wrapping, Wellness programs, Weed Whackers, special events, Cookhouse renovations, the Casino fundraiser, trail maintenance, and willow harvesting. While there are many couples and families who volunteer with the Friends, the time and commitment put forth by the Ratliffe family is truly astounding and we are very grateful for their ongoing support. In addition to their volunteer efforts, Will, who works in the environmental group at Husky Energy, recently helped secure funds from Husky to support Friends of Fish Creek environmental sustainability programs. The Ratliffes recently took some time to answer a few questions and share their experiences with the readers of the *Voice of Friends*.

"We feel very fortunate to have a little slice of nature to share with our kids so close to home," Rose said, "Fish Creek Provincial Park became our extended backyard for when we couldn't escape the city but needed some nature."

Since moving from Manitoba and settling near Votier's Flats in 2003, Rose and Will have regularly visited Fish Creek, and have many memories of bringing Michael and Karen to the park when they were younger.

"Votier's holds a lot of family memories for us," Will said, "Like the time one Christmas when we went for a winter walk with a very little Karen, who was galloping her hobby horse. The toy horse was singing 'I'm a little pony, such a pretty pony.....' and that song is still stuck in our heads. More recently, I recall skiing up the

creek on a -30°C New Years Eve just last year. The park was just beautiful."

"Watching beavers is always entertaining," Rose said, "It took years before Karen actually saw a beaver. We would point out dams, lodges and ponds, but if there was a beaver to see, she would miss it. I think she was starting to think that beavers were make believe until we watched one swimming upriver through trees during the flood in 2009. It was an amazing experience to share." Speaking of wildlife in the park, "Cougar and lynx prints in the winter are always interesting," Will said, "while we have not actually seen a cougar or a lynx, we keep looking and hoping to see one."

As Park Watch Stewards and Park Watch Supply Coordinators, Rose, Will, Karen and Michael have been able to explore Fish Creek, see the area in a new way, and learn about the issues facing the park. "My favourite volunteer experience has been the Park Watch program and completing the supply runs," Michael said, "because it involves spending time in Fish Creek, interacting with park visitors and helping out in a way that doesn't feel like work." Rose added, "One thing we quickly discovered as Park Watch Stewards was how little we knew of the park, and we keep discovering new spots and hidden gems."

Cont'd on next page

SAVE THE DATE - FRIENDS AGM IS ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2019

Registration at 6:30 pm, Meeting starts at 7:00 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.

Join us at the Annual General Meeting to meet our board and staff. Refreshments will be served.

Only members who have paid their 2018 - 2019 Membership dues are eligible to vote.

To register please visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/event/agm

VOLUNTEERS IN PROFILE cont'd from previous page

"I think that volunteering in the park was part of what helped me decide that I wanted to go into environmental science," said Karen, who is currently studying Environmental Management at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay. "Volunteering with the Friends, and with other groups working in the park has definitely provided experience with projects like riparian restoration to help me be sure that I will enjoy some of what I may do in my future career." "My time volunteering has helped me to know I'm interested in working with nature." Michael added, "It has also recently helped me to take on a leadership role, which isn't something most young people my age can experience, especially when working with adults."

In 2017 Rose, Will, Karen and Michael helped clean up and map out large-scale flood debris that had accumulated on Poplar Island. This project was a team effort by the Friends and Alberta Parks, and an event that stood out for Rose. "Our favourite volunteer experience as a family was the day we operated the 'ferry' to transport other volunteers to Poplar Island to map flood debris," she said, "It was more physically demanding than we anticipated but it was also so much fun to explore the 'forbidden zone' of Poplar Island. We found a Geocache that had been placed in Riverbend by a Cub Scout group and after figuring out where it came from, we had the pleasure of going with Julia Millen (AEP Liaison) to one of their meetings to return it."

In recognition of their volunteer contributions, Michael and Karen received the Alberta Parks and Protected

Areas Junior Achievement Award at the 2017 Alberta Parks Volunteer Conference. "Volunteering is something I have done my entire life, and I'm trying to continue volunteering while at university." Karen said, "Partly because it's just what I do, but also because I always get something out of volunteering, even if it's only a sense of having done something productive. Volunteering isn't just work. It can be a reason to go outside, to meet people, even to try something new and relaxing. My favourite volunteer activity has probably been the Riparian Restoration program, because it is just such a neat thing to do. I always enjoy projects that make a noticeable and immediate difference."

Through all of their volunteer projects, the Ratliffes are not only benefitting Fish Creek Provincial Park, but are also strengthening their family as Michael and Karen begin to find their own respective paths. To the readers of this newsletter Rose would like to share the message, "When it comes to volunteering, you don't need to jump in at the deep end like we did (our family motto seems to be if it is worth doing, it is worth overdoing). If you are even a little bit interested in giving back and helping out, then find a project that works for you and sign up. You will find other wonderful volunteers, incredibly appreciative staff and an immense sense of satisfaction at helping out your park. And just maybe you will find yourself signing up for at least one more project."

Thanks so much to Rose, Will, Karen and Michael and we look forward to working with you for many years to come.

A TASTE OF AUTUMN

A TASTE OF AUTUMN, A TRULY MEMORABLE EVENING

The Friends and members of the Fish Creek community welcomed autumn and celebrated this amazing park at the fifth annual *A Taste of Autumn – Wine & Beer Tasting and Silent Auction Fundraiser* on Friday, September 28. We were very pleased to host this year's fundraiser at a new venue, the beautiful and picturesque Canyon Meadows Golf & Country Club, which borders the central area of Fish Creek near Votier's Flats. Special thanks to Canyon Meadows Golf & Country Club for their support and participation in this event.

Close to 100 community members came out and we raised over \$13,000 for Friends of Fish Creek community engagement programs and activities!

We had close to 70 auction items this year including gift certificates, gift baskets, special vouchers, books, clothing, household goods, paintings, and photographs. Graham Sucha MLA for Calgary-Shaw discussed the Friends' positive impact on the community and emphasized the importance of volunteers. Julia Millen Friends of Fish Creek Liaison and Acting Community & Partner Relations Team Lead discussed how the Friends and AEP work together. Friends volunteer Irma Goosen did a great job as Master of Ceremonies, keeping the evening's activities and presentations on schedule. Voluntary Keynote Speaker Harry Sanders, Calgary based Historian, Historical Consultant, Freelance Writer, and former Calgary Historian Laureate presented on the fascinating history of this city.

We sincerely appreciate the support of Green Gate Garden Centres for sponsoring *A Taste of Autumn*. Thank you to WestJet for once again providing the Gift of Flight Raffle prize, and congratulations to Eleanor



Harris for winning the raffle prize! Beer and wine tastings were provided by Six Corners, Field Stone, Village Brewery, Spirit Hills and Zero Issue. Friends volunteers Bob and Marie Bakker hosted a Photobooth and many of the attendees enjoyed having their

photo taken in front of the backdrop of the golf course and the Fish Creek valley. Local artist Keating was in attendance to discuss his works and his painted portraits.

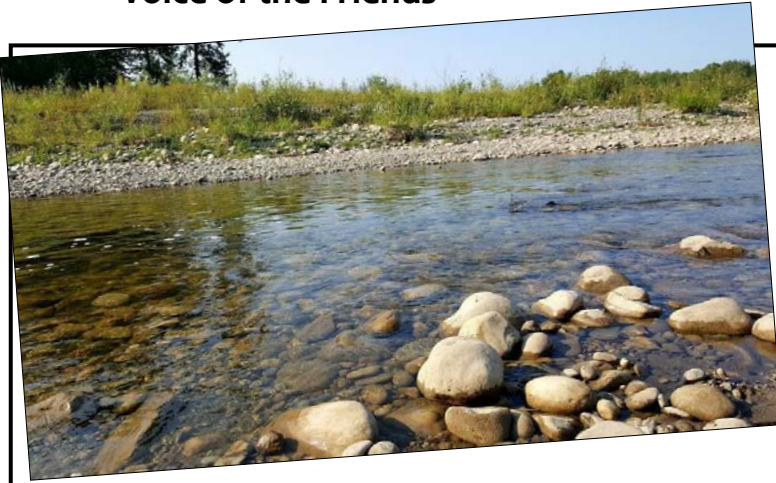
Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for donating silent auction items: Avenida Pet Clinic, Steve Bulman, Calaway Park, Calgary Hitmen Hockey Club, Calgary Stampede, Canmore Nordic Centre, Canyon Meadows Golf & Country Club, Capture Nature 2018 Participants - Tony LePrieur, Alexis Peters and Ward Sanderson, Chinook Arch Meadery, Fish Tales Fly Shop, Friends of Fish Creek Minibus Drivers and Birding Course Instructors, Charné and Irma Goosen, Michelle Hoare, Holistic Institute of Health and Fertility, Rob Hummel, Julie Marwood Interiors, Keating Painted Portraits, Mike Kelly, Jason Kenney MLA, Kensington Art Supply, Lori Mainland, Wayne Meikle, McKenzie Meadows Golf Club, Method Fitness, Bruce Mitchell, Bob Morrin, Larry and Helen Newel, Oxford Learning, Jim Pescott, Ken Pride, Sylvia Prochownik, Robin Read, Theresa Romansky, Soffritto, Pedalhead/Skiworks, Peter Spear, the Pumphouse Theatre, Royal Tyrrell Museum, Phil Smith, Strides Running Store, SunSational Day Spa, TELUS Spark, Tiber River Naturals, Under Armour, The Venturers Society of Calgary, Vex Performance, The Wild Bird Store, Wild Rose Brewery, and Zero Issue.

Thank you to the volunteers who helped in a variety of positions to ensure that *A Taste of Autumn* ran smoothly and to everyone who purchased tickets.

Photo courtesy of Ward Sanderson



CAPTURE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



The Friends would like to thank everyone who participated in our 2018 Capture Nature Photography Contest! The contest ran during May, June and July and each month had a specific theme, *Serenity in Nature*, *Reflections*, and *Summer Colour*, respectively. Photographers were encouraged to submit photos that fit into these categories. We received 40 stunning images of Fish Creek Provincial Park this year, and for the first time, were able to invite the public to take part by voting through our new, on-line gallery.

Prizes were awarded for the best photos in two categories:

- Public Vote – based on the highest number of votes received in the photo gallery
- Juror Vote – based on technical/artistic merits and how well the photos reflected the theme to which they were submitted, as decided by our contest Jurors

Some of the staff favorites were also available as framed prints that were sold at *A Taste of Autumn* on September 28 (see page 3 for more info on *A Taste of Autumn*)

Thank you to our contest sponsors, MEC, Vistek and RMB Photography for donating exciting contest prizes! To see all of the photos submitted visit <https://bit.ly/2OitUlj>



Winning photographs (top to bottom, left to right)

- Juror Vote - Youth: Hull's Wood River by Rakshita Jain
- Public Vote - Adult: Fish Creek Patriarch by Shane Long
- Public Vote - Youth: Cranston Riverstone Sunset by Eden Maracle
- Juror Vote - Adult: Boat Ramp Flower by Ken Pride

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FRIENDS' SUMMER

Shana Barbour

Friends of Fish Creek Program Coordinator

With the arrival of fall comes the end to many of our programs, while others are in their final days. It was another beautiful and busy summer, with many new and interesting developments that stood out for us that we'd like to share.

In May we kicked off our 4th annual *Capture Nature Photography Contest* and provided the public with the ability to view photo submissions in the new [on-line gallery](#) for the very first time! We also walked alongside participants during two sold-out Good Grief programs, wrapping up in June with inspirational performances by the [Bridge to Peace Threshold Choir](#). Our Good Grief participants continue to meet each Tuesday night for self-directed walks in the park, and we are excited to start planning the new Good Grief routes in 2019.

June saw the return of our yoga and Spring Forest Qi Gong sessions for the 6th year of our Wellness program. We were thrilled to welcome our newest instructor, Divya Singh, and her offering of meditation sessions in August. Two combo classes that combine yoga, meditation and Qi Gong in an extended format - which we refer to as a "Superclasses" - were also offered, with one being a special dedication class intended to send positive energy to those affected by the BC wildfires.



CUPS (Calgary Urban Project Society) volunteers planting trees on May 24.

Over \$240 was raised through this class and donated to the Red Cross in support of BC's fire-fighting and community support

efforts. Instructors Gwen Draude (pictured here) and Diane Smith also represented the Friends at MEC's new Seton location grand opening event on September 8, with free demo Qi Gong and yoga classes for the public.



During the Spring and Summer, our Weed Whacker volunteers were busy addressing different species of invasive plants in areas that are somewhat localized and where manual pulling is still an effective control strategy. Our efforts were concentrated at the ATCO Heritage Grassland to help ensure the native grasses have the opportunity to become well established. In addition to our own volunteers, we were blessed to have groups from the Calgary Drop In and Rehabilitation Centre and Care West Innovative Health Care regularly work in the grassland. These volunteers contributed to a visible and significant reduction in the abundance of weeds over the summer.

Our public education programs expanded this year through the addition of new walking and minibus tours, along with the development of a volunteer training program that resulted in a handful of new Guides and Tour Assistants. These developments will ensure that our tours can be offered to the public on a more regular basis and on a greater number of topics, thereby contributing to the program's long-term sustainability.

Cont'd on next page

SUMMER UPDATE cont'd from previous page

In another effort to expand our education programming and ensure that our programs are accessible to all, concentrated efforts were made to promote our Youth Nature Programs to New Canadians and groups that are financially marginalized. These efforts allowed us to engage young people from the [Calgary Urban Project Society \(CUPS\)](#), [Metis Calgary Family Services](#), the [Iraqi Social Club of Alberta](#) and the [CNIB Foundation](#).

We are only able to engage the public to the degree that we do through the support of our community partners, members, donors, funders and incredibly dedicated and talented army of volunteers. We are grateful for the energy and efforts that others contribute to our work in Fish Creek Provincial Park to make what we do possible!

REWILDING IN FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

As we enter the fall season, the Friends are focussing our efforts on “ReWilding” through our riparian restoration projects. Riparian areas are transition zones between land and water that are characterized by water-loving plant species such as willows, dogwood and balsam poplar; they are incredibly rich in biodiversity and provide important ecosystem services including drought and flood mitigation when they are functioning well. However, Fish Creek Provincial Park is a well-loved and highly visited place, and this can result in degraded areas along the creek that negatively impact the system’s ability to function well. Our ReWilding projects are designed to help mitigate the negative impacts of human use in the park, thereby increasing flood resiliency and recovery following high water or flood events.



Riparian Stewards are volunteers who take on different tasks involved in this work, such as scarifying (breaking up) soil, digging out invasive weeds, planting native shrubs and trees, spreading native plant seed and erecting protective fences to close off the restoration sites. Each year we depend on dozens of volunteers to help execute these projects and this year we are excited to be working with volunteers in the new role of

Riparian Monitoring Steward. These Stewards have been trained by the [Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society](#) (also known as Cows and Fish) to complete riparian health assessments that will be used to help us prioritize and plan our restoration projects for the coming years. They are currently

assessing the health of a one-kilometer stretch of Fish Creek, directly west of Bridge 11 and have chosen our new restoration sites based on these reports!

Our ReWilding field work is taking place during the week of October 15. [Check out our website](#) for more information about this program!

We are grateful to our partners who have supported us since 2014 on the planning and execution of our ReWilding work: [Alberta Environment and Parks](#), [Cows and Fish](#), [Trout Unlimited Canada](#) and the [Venturers Society](#). These projects would not be possible without the generous financial support of our funders: [Alberta Environment and Parks – Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program](#) and [Alberta Ecotrust Foundation](#)

FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK DAY USE AREA UPDATE

Julia Millen

Community and Partner Relations Team Lead, Alberta Parks, Kananaskis Region

Bebo Grove Day Use Area

The road down into Bebo Grove (24 St SW) is currently closed. The City of Calgary is building a traffic circle and Bus Rapid Transit station at 24 St and Woodpark Blvd SW. Construction started in June and will continue until further notice. This is part of a larger City project improving storm water drainage in the communities north of Bebo Grove. The road will likely open up after the circle is complete and close some months later so the city can install a large storm water pipe under the road from Woodpark down into the park. During the construction phases, the field east of the Bebo Grove parking lot will be developed into wetlands and a picnic area.

The Bebo Grove Day Use washroom is closed during this time. Portable toilets are located near the washroom building. The closure does not affect the pathway system at Bebo. The area can be accessed via the pedestrian pathway system. For updates visit The City of Calgary website at <https://bit.ly/2zSwYeX>

Stream Changes Trail

Everyone Belongs Outside: Alberta Parks' Inclusion Strategy (2014) recognizes physical and cultural barriers to accessing and enjoying Alberta's provincial parks system. It considers ways to improve access, invite participation and increase capacity. As part of "improving access," Parks audited park sites across Alberta, looking for places to offer a 1 km barrier-free experience. Seven were chosen, including one right here in Fish Creek Provincial Park!

The Stream Changes Trail (pictured above), just south of the Friends of Fish Creek office, is now fully accessible and barrier-free. You might have seen crews at work widening and repaving the trail, and replacing handrails along sloped sections of the trail (for example, at the approach to the bridge). Work should finish in October



and is weather dependent. Come out and explore the "new" trail and enjoy the beauty of the fall colours along Fish Creek.

Lafarge Meadows Day Use access

The 194 Avenue access at the south end of Lafarge Meadows is currently closed (until the end of November). The avenue is being upgraded by West Creek Developments to City of Calgary roadway standards. In the meantime, you can still enjoy the area by walking in from the north (starting from the Boat Launch), or by foot from Chaparral Valley Drive.

Flood Recovery Work

In 2017, volunteers helped remove 10 tonnes of non-natural flood debris from FCPP. A further 18 tonnes (mapped by volunteers) was removed by a contractor from Poplar Island, a special preservation island in the park. In 2018, flood debris clean-ups continued in Lafarge Meadows and Rotary Nature Park at the south end of FC. Thanks to the Friends of Fish Creek, corporate volunteers, school groups and community volunteers, enough flood debris was removed to fill a medium-sized dumpster. Depending on weather, the remaining materials (mapped by volunteers) are scheduled for clean-up by a contractor in November, since they are too large or hazardous for removal by hand.

THE FISH CREEK BIRD BLIND

Shana Barbour

Friends of Fish Creek Program Coordinator



Fish Creek Provincial Park is home to over 200 different bird species, ranging from the ever-present chickadee to sandpipers, blue herons and even pelicans. Birding is one

of the most popular activities in the park, and birding enthusiasts come from all around the city for opportunities to catch a glimpse or photo of whatever they are lucky enough to see. This year, a new addition to the park will contribute to the already amazing birding experience in the park!

Several years ago, the Friends were approached by members of the birding community about the possibility of building a bird blind in the park. These structures provide places for people to “hide” and watch birds without disturbing them, so the birds are less likely to be scared away. Traditional blinds are usually small wooden buildings with four walls, a roof and lateral viewing windows. The Friends were supportive of the idea and agreed to bring it to the attention of Alberta Parks staff. Whilst Parks staff also supported this new venture in the park, the traditional design was deemed unsuitable as it presented some risks identified by Parks Conservation Officers:

- The structure could not be made of wood (due to flammability)
- It should not be easily climbable (for safety reasons)
- It could not be enclosed by walls or have a roof (could encourage people to set up camp).

The Friends helped locate a design used at the East Point Bird Sanctuary in Toronto, this was presented to Parks staff and approved. Several Friends of Fish Creek birding volunteers advised on the number, size and location of viewing windows; there are eight windows at varying heights, the lowest of which are at a height

suitable for young children, viewers who may want to bring a folding chair and sit for a while, or those who use a wheelchair.

The original site proposed was on the berm of the engineered wetland just north of Stoney Trail on the park road that leads to Lafarge Meadows. This location was turned down by The City of Calgary (the authority responsible for all the engineered wetlands in the park) as the berm was not designed to support a structure so our birding volunteers came up with an alternative location, these same volunteers also secured some funding from Nature Calgary to help make the project possible.

The blind was built over the winter and erected in March; it can be found in the east end of the park near the Burnsmead wetlands. It is a steel structure that functions as a blind but is also quite unique-looking, bringing a bit of “art” to the park.

Signage for the structure is currently in development. If you are going to visit the blind, we ask that you park in the Burnsmead lot and walk east, parallel to the road, to reach it. It is against Park regulations to park along the roadway. Also, please remember - no matter how enticing it might be to do so - it is also illegal to feed wildlife in a Provincial Park, and this includes birds.

Our thanks to Steve Sozniuk of Refining MetalWorks for his technical and creative skill in building this new structure, members of the Birding Community for their input and direction related to the final design and to Alberta Environment and Parks for their openness to this idea, the first of its kind in the park.

As this is an entirely new feature in the park the Friends will be reaching out to the community with a function and use survey later in the fall to gather feedback for other potential bird blind installations in the park.

FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK MEMBERSHIP

RENEW YOUR COMMITMENT TO A SUSTAINABLE FISH CREEK

Members are the foundation of the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society, and annual contributions help us to carry out our mission: *To engage the community through education and awareness to conserve a truly unique naturalized urban park.* Society benefits include regular

updates on park events, admission to Fish Creek Speaker Series presentations, valuable discounts on the popular birding course, discounts at local businesses and this newsletter.

The Friends hope you have enjoyed some of the programs, courses, events and activities we organize throughout the year in Fish Creek Provincial Park, like wellness and minibus outings, volunteer opportunities, and special presentations. We invite you to upcoming Fish Creek Speaker Series presentations (*page 2*), to



take part in the popular Winter Birding Course (*page 1*), and to support the Jobber's House Renovation project (*page 3*).

As an alternative to annual membership renewals, you may be interested in the Park Protector monthly donor program,

the most convenient way to support Fish Creek everyday. For more info on the Park Protector program visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/park-protector-signup

You can renew your commitment to Fish Creek online at www.friendsoffishcreek.org/membership, in person at the Cookhouse at the Bow Valley Ranch, by mailing in the form at the bottom of this page with a cheque, or by calling us with a credit card number.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing you in the park.

Membership Form -

The Friends of Fish Creek, PO Box 2780 Stn M Calgary, AB T2P 2M7
403-238-3841 info@friendsoffishcreek.org www.friendsoffishcreek.org

For info about the Park Protector program visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/park-protector-signup

Name: _____ Phone: _____

email: _____ Address: _____

City and Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Work place (optional): _____

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

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/membership or donate on CanadaHelps.org

(Charitable Registration #891199747 RR0001)

Signature of donor or member: _____

Applicants must be 18 years of age or older to become members. Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$10.00 or more or if requested.

Thank You Supporters!

Bobcat Level:



TD Friends of the
Environment
Foundation



QUIZ ANSWER - AUG / SEP ISSUE

Which provincial park located south west of Calgary recently received a pledge of \$3 million for upgrades from the provincial government?

Castle Wildland and Castle Provincial Park will receive these funds for back country huts, trail development and other facilities in order to preserve these parks and increase tourism. Castle Wildland Provincial Park covers an area of approximately 797 km² from the Crowsnest Pass to Waterton Lakes National Park along the BC border. Castle Provincial Park to the north east of the Wildland, covers 255 km². These new parks were proposed in September 2015, and in 2016 AEP began consulting with stakeholders, First Nations, municipalities, user groups, and scientists about the development of these parks. In January of 2017 these areas received designation as Alberta Provincial Parks. Learn more about Castle Wildland and Castle Provincial Park at the Fish Creek Speaker Series presentation on October 25.

talkaep.alberta.ca/CastleManagementPlan
calgaryherald.com/news/politics/ndp-government-unveils-new-recreation-activity-in-castle
albertaparks.ca/parks/south/castle-wpp/

2018 EXECUTIVE

Chair	Bob Morrin
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Director at Large	Kari Horn
Director at Large	Naomi Parker
Park Liaison	Julia Millen

STAFF

Nic Blanchet, Executive Director
nic@friendsoffishcreek.org

Katie Bakken, Program Coordinator
katie@friendsoffishcreek.org

Shana Barbour, Program Coordinator
shana@friendsoffishcreek.org

Chris Lalonde, Communications Coordinator
chris@friendsoffishcreek.org

AUTUMN COLOUR, FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

Limited Edition 25th Anniversary Signature Painting by Jim Pescott

Each limited edition print is numbered and signed by Jim, and comes with a certificate of authenticity. There are only 21 of these very special limited edition prints of *Autumn Colour* available for purchase! There are only 2 "open edition" prints available (not numbered or signed). For more information or to purchase *Autumn Colour, Fish Creek Provincial Park* please drop by the office or visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/store



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 www.naturecalgary.com

Birding in, and east of, Calgary - All day excursion, Saturday, November 10, 9:30 am - 4:00 pm Meet in the main parking lot at the Bow Valley Ranch, Fish Creek Provincial Park. Leader - Terry Korolyk, 403-254-1878