

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

www.friendsoffishcreek.org

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THE FISH CREEK COMMUNITY TERRACE



Every brick tells a story and we invite you to share your story with park visitors by dedicating a brick along the Fish Creek Community Terrace. The Friends of Fish Creek invite you to show your support for this amazing natural area within the city by leaving a lasting legacy at the Bow Valley Ranch in Fish Creek Provincial Park. You may have seen the 300 personalized bricks installed in front of the Cookhouse, commemorating milestones like weddings, anniversaries, new family members, or memorials for those who have passed on. If you did not get a chance to dedicate a brick along the pathway, or would like to dedicate another brick, now is the perfect opportunity to support the Friends of Fish Creek and share a little of your own story. If you have a local business, consider having a brick inscribed for your business - it's great advertising in a very busy area! Brick Inscriptions can have 2 lines of text with 16 characters per line, and simple shapes like hearts and circles can be accomplished. Bricks are only \$250 and you will receive a tax receipt for your contribution. There are now fewer than 70 spaces available for the Fish Creek Community Terrace. We are planning to install the bricks this summer and registration for this amazing program will close June 1.

For more information, please contact the Friends of Fish Creek at 403-238-3841 ext. 1
or visit <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/brick>



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2021 Executive

Membership Renewal

FISH CREEK SPEAKER SERIES

Through the Fish Creek Speaker Series program, professionals from a variety of fields and areas of expertise share their knowledge and experiences. Presentations will take place online using Zoom Video Conferencing software and you do not need to have a Zoom account to join. 150 tickets will be available for each presentation, however only the first 100 participants/users will be able to join. If two or more people watch on one system/device, Zoom will recognize this as one participant. Presentations are free to Friends of Fish Creek members and \$10.00 for non-members. Youth 16 years of age or younger can attend free of charge. Registration is required. For information please stay tuned to <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/speaker-series/>

Elbow River State of the Watershed Report

Wednesday, March 24, 2021 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm, online

Presented by Flora Giesbrecht, Watershed Coordinator for the Elbow River Watershed Partnership

For more information, please visit <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/event/elbowriver>

The Fascinating World of Fungi

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm, online

Presented by Lacy Roberts, CPAWS Intern and HBSc. Environmental Science

Explore the fascinating world of fungi beneath our feet. Gain a valuable understanding of how these seemingly insignificant organisms have helped to shape our world since the beginning of time. Explore the interconnectivity between topics such as dinosaurs and the infinite galaxies all around us. Learn about edible and poisonous mushrooms, the medicinal properties and uses of fungi, and how innovation and technology have increased awareness about the conservation of our natural spaces. When people connect with their surroundings, they tend to care more about the health and safety of the world around them. For it is with a full understanding of how a ecological system works that appropriate change can be enacted.



FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK ONLINE STORE



- New! Long Sleeve Tee with Word Cloud. 100% polyester jersey with wicking technology. Word cloud based on input from recent volunteer survey.
 - Friends hats, \$20.00 each
 - 14 oz, Stainless Steel Travel mug, \$20.00 each
 - 25th Anniversary Signature Artwork, Limited Edition Print by Jim Pescott, \$275.00
- And much more!** Keep checking the online store for exciting new items to be added this spring! www.friendsoffishcreek.org/store

QUIZ QUESTION

Samuel W Shaw is a popular name around South Calgary due to his rich history in the area. Part of that history includes launching Alberta's First Industry. In what year was Shaw's Woollen Mill launched?

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

BOW VALLEY RANCH VISITOR CENTRE RE-OPENING

If you have been to the Bow Valley Ranch area of Fish Creek Provincial Park, you have most likely seen the large '70s era-looking building across the pathway from the Cookhouse. This is the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre and while you have most likely seen the building, have you gone inside and walked around the exhibit area? In the centre, visitors can discover the fascinating history of this city and park dating back from prehistoric times all the way to the current day, and even see archaeological artifacts from historical areas in the park. The centre is accessible to all park visitors and is located close to the Bow Valley Rancho Restaurant, Annie's, the Artisan Gardens, the creek itself, the Bow River and a variety of trails and pathways.

Unfortunately, in recent years provincial funding restrictions have resulted in the centre being closed most of the time, and since the start of the pandemic last spring, the centre has been closed to the public. In the autumn of 2020, the Friends of Fish Creek and Alberta Environment and Parks embarked on the Enhanced Partnership Project. This project is designed to help the Friends increase our capacity to support the park and in turn provide more benefits to the community. One of the many projects we are collaborating on is the opening of the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre.

The Friends are very excited to be able to re-open the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre with the support of Alberta Environment and Parks. Trained volunteers, known as Fish Creek Ambassadors, will be working in the centre to provide information and answer questions for park visitors. Fish Creek Ambassadors will also collect information about the number of visitors and the reason for their visit - a practice that will allow us to better understand how the park is being used and how often. This type of information will give us the



ability to enhance our current programs and develop new programs that will benefit both the park and members of the public.

Our goal is to work with volunteers and the park to ensure that the Visitor Centre is open year-round. A staged opening is planned that will begin with having the centre open for a few hours on weekdays, and gradually increasing hours of operation. Through the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre project, our dedicated volunteers who know the Friends, know our programs and know the park, will act the first point of contact with park visitors.

Due to current Covid-19 regulations, there is no firm date on when the Visitor Centre can be opened. Once we can continue with the opening there will be more information sent out to your emails and on our social media channels. We hope once the Visitor Centre is up and running, that you come down and say hello to the Ambassadors and take a walk around the exhibit.

Special thanks to Staples in McKenzie Towne for providing a significant discount on office supplies needed for a successful operation of the Visitor Centre.

BUILDING OUR WELLNESS PROGRAM

Since 2013, the Friends have offered our Wellness Program as a way to engage the public in various outdoor activities that support mind, body and spirit. Starting with yoga and meditation sessions in that first year, we later branched out to include other offerings like Spring Forest Qi Gong, Nordic walking, running clinics, BungyPump fitness walking, plein-air painting and more!



All programs take place at the Bow Valley Ranch, however it may be possible for programming to occur at a different location. If you have a background in wellness and are interested in discussing this opportunity, please contact Shana Barbour, Social

Enterprise & Stewardship Manager at shana@friendsoffishcreek.org or 587-317-7107.

Each year is a bit different, as we rely on the time and expertise of volunteer instructors to lead these programs. We are currently working on planning our 2021 Wellness Program, and with that, are reaching out to the community in search of one or two additional instructors to help us round out this year's suite of offerings. Professional certification (or being in the process of achieving this in their area of specialty) is preferred, but not mandatory. A one-season commitment is perfect (June through August), after which, together we can assess the program and discuss its continuation in subsequent years.

The Wellness Instructor Volunteer Job Description provides more information about this role. We would also like to take this opportunity to share our gratitude for the support and dedication of last year's Wellness Instructors, some of whom have been part of this program from the very beginning: Naomi Parker (yoga), Divya Singh (meditation), Diana Young (BungyPump), Karen Salamandick (Forest Bathing) and Annette Ng (Hiking 101 and Map & Compass Navigation). We are most grateful for their generosity and commitment to our work, and for the opportunity it provides us to connect the community to the incredible gifts they have to share.

MEMBERSHIP SHOWS YOU CARE Renew Your Commitment to Fish Creek!

The Friends would like to thank all of our returning members and new members who have signed up over the past few months. It is because of our members, donors, volunteers, partners and sponsors that we are able to deliver programs and events in and around Fish Creek Provincial Park. If you have not done so yet, we invite you to renew your membership or sign up as a member to show your support for Fish Creek Provincial Park. Membership benefits include a discount on the popular Birding Course, admission to Fish Creek Speaker Series presentations, and a discount at select local businesses. The current membership year will run until December 31, 2021. To renew please visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/membership or mail in the form on the back page of this newsletter along with a cheque. As an alternative to annual membership, the Park Protector effortless donor program may suite your busy lifestyle a little better. For more info about the Park Protector program, please visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/park-protector-signup

HOW YOU, YOUR BUSINESS OR COMMUNITY GROUP CAN SUPPORT FISH CREEK THIS YEAR

2021 is already shaping up to be an incredibly busy year, full of programs, events and volunteer opportunities – both new and old – geared towards engaging the community in as many diverse and interesting ways as possible. Part of the important work we do each year is to plan fundraising initiatives so that we can fill gaps in funding and ensure we have a stable financial base to support our work and the various education and stewardship opportunities we offer. While much of our funding comes from grants, memberships, program fees and general donations, it takes a great deal of work and a highly coordinated effort to ensure that all costs are covered in a growing organization like the Friends.



Our staff are working collaboratively with Community Action Team volunteers to put the finishing touches on our fund development plan for the year. CAT volunteers are central to the execution of this plan, as they actively engage with local businesses about opportunities for partnerships and funding to support for our organization.

Are you interested in supporting the Friends of Fish Creek this year? Maybe your local business could donate a product or service towards our silent auction for our annual fundraiser. Perhaps you work at a large company that has a matching donation program, or would be interested in sponsoring one of our programs or events for the year in exchange for public recognition. Are you part of a faith or community group that might be

interested in participating in a [Group Stewardship Experience?](#)

The opportunities to support Fish Creek Provincial Park are almost endless!



Photo courtesy of Ron Ostrander

With that in mind, here are our funding priorities for 2021:

- Truck sponsorship (annual or multi-year) to help keep our stewardship truck fully maintained and in good working order.
- Donations of products or services to act as prizes for our Capture Nature Photo Contest or annual silent auction.
- Program sponsorships (annual or multi-year) for Wellness Programs, our public tour program, the Fish Creek Speaker Series or stewardship programs (Weed Whackers, ReWilding, Tree Wrapping etc)
- Event sponsorship – for *Creekfest* (hopefully a combination virtual and in-person event this year) and our annual fundraiser (to be announced in the coming months).

If you, your business or your community group share our vision for a sustainable Fish Creek Provincial Park and would like to support our efforts, we would love to discuss the different opportunities with you.

Please contact Shana Barbour, Social Enterprise & Stewardship Manager, at shana@friendsoffishcreek.org or at 587-317-7107, to discuss how you would like to be part of shaping the future of the Friends of Fish Creek.

BEAVERS IN FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

BUILDING PATHWAYS TO COEXISTENCE

Thanks to the financial support of Alberta Environment and Parks' Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program, the Friends spearheaded our first ever Beaver Coexistence Project in 2020. The goals of this project are to mitigate the negative impacts of beaver activity and to raise awareness about the positive effects of beavers on the environment.

The project focused on the area between Marshall Springs and Bebo Grove, where beaver activity had caused long-term flooding and the closure of a stretch of pathway that was once part of a nice loop for visitors to walk, run or cycle. To the public, it may have seemed that nothing was being done. However, we were working to foster coexistence with our furry friends by securing funds and support in order to develop a comprehensive plan to deal with the situation.

In September 2020, the Friends of Fish Creek hosted a three-day workshop to assess the site, and assemble and install a series of flow control devices. These coexistence structures manage water levels to alleviate pathway flooding while allowing the beavers the depth of water they require to survive winter. With our partners at You Betula Environmental, we have developed a team of Beaver Coexistence Volunteers who monitor the sites regularly, record observations into our digital app and carry out necessary maintenance to help ensure project success. A huge thank you to all our Beaver Coexistence Volunteers, especially to our two lead volunteers, Rose and Will Ratcliffe!

Although the flooding has been alleviated, the pathway remains closed due to the damage sustained while submerged. Our partners at AEP will be deciding the best course of action on the pathway pending project success and good trail design.

The Fish Creek Beaver Coexistence project also featured 11 tours for public, partners and land managers

from other jurisdictions, three beaver-focused Fish Creek Speaker Series presentations and seven pop-up outreach stations, engaging over 1,300 individuals so far.

The work will continue in 2021, with plans to host another event similar to [the 2020 Living with Beavers event](https://friendsoffishcreek.org/beavers/), more pop-up outreach and a video showcasing the project. We are excited to continue this work and hope to see you at a tour or outreach table in the park this year! For more information stay tuned to <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/beavers/>

There are many ways to get involved in this project, whether it be as a Beaver Coexistence Volunteer, Community Events and Outreach Volunteer, or as a member of the public taking part in these activities. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Katie at 403-238-3841 ext. 6 to discuss the wide variety of opportunities available.

A huge thank you to all who are helping to transform the societal narrative around beavers into one of coexistence: Friends of Fish Creek volunteers and project partners such as AEP, Miistakis Institute, Cows and Fish, Canadian Conservation Corps, You Betula Environmental, Humane Solutions, Ruby Eaglechild and the City of Calgary. We look forward to continuing this work in 2021!



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING I ❤️ FISH CREEK

The month of November was a very exciting one for the Friends of Fish Creek as we launched our first online fundraiser, I ❤️ Fish Creek! Through this fundraising campaign community members could contribute by donating through our website, texting to donate, bidding on online auction items, creating a fundraising team, sharing their Fish Creek story, or by donating on GivingTuesday, the final day of the campaign. Our goal was to raise \$12,500 towards our conservation efforts in Fish Creek Provincial Park and we surpassed our goal to raise just over \$13,000!

Due to the current public health and safety situation we were not able to host our annual gala event *A Taste of Autumn Silent Auction*. While this event was missed by many community members, the online silent auction during the month of November was a great success.

Thank you to everyone who donated and bid on silent auction items. It was truly amazing to see so many community members donating what they could during these difficult times. Special thanks to Cal and Julie Morstad for their very generous donation of \$5000, and thank you to the Sarjeant Family for donating \$3000 towards this campaign!

We would like to thank the following businesses, organizations and individuals for contributing auction

items -

Avenida Pet Clinic, The Bownesian Grocer, Calgary Co-op Deer Valley,

Calgary Cycle, Capital Chevrolet Buick GMC, City & Country Urban Winery, Clyde Vincett LTD, Bev Doolittle, Eau Claire Distillery, Fish Tales Fly Shop, Friends of Fish Creek Birding Course Instructors, Highwood Golf, Holistic Institute of Health & Fertility, Home Depot, Journey Health Studio, Kensington Art Supply and Instruction, McKenzie Meadows Golf Club, Pensak Houghton Dentistry, Rocky Mountain Soap Company, Roli Mack's Music, Elisabeth Roth, Soffritto, Starbucks Deer Valley, SunnyCider and Sunshine Minting Inc. The auction would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the Community Action Team volunteers Ron Deshayes, Angel Spasoff, and Bob Bowman.

Through the I ❤️ Fish Creek online fundraiser we have learned some new ways of reaching our community and raising funds for our conservation efforts focused on this truly amazing and cherished park.



Fish Creek Stories Shared by the Community

Fish Creek is the most amazing inter-city park in the country, it is a way to escape to the wild right here in Calgary.
-Andrea

The Park is my second home. I am an avid bird photographer and some of my best shots have been in the park. It is tranquil, peaceful, beautiful, wild, diverse. Blessed that it's right next door! -Claudia

It reminds me to be grateful for the people who donated the land. When faced with the sometimes ugly side of life that we are surrounded by an abundance of natural beauty that can fill our souls. -Anonymous

Fish Creek Provincial Park is like a best friend. No matter what the weather the multitude of pathways lead one to the awe inspiring beauty of nature. I am so blessed to live near Fish Creek Provincial Park. -Helena

Fish Creek Provincial Park has so many different areas and lots of opportunities. -Oscar

Photo courtesy of Julie Gourdeau

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN FISH CREEK



Beaver Coexistence: Flow Control Device Monitoring and Maintenance Program (T, F, S)

In September 2020, the Friends of Fish Creek, along with partner organizations and consultants, installed 4 flow control devices in Marshall Springs to mitigate the negative effects of beavers on the paved pathway. Volunteers in this program monitor these installations to ensure they

The 2021 volunteering season is just around the corner, and we are looking for people to assist with various programs. Not only are there opportunities for our longstanding programs, such as Park Watch, Weed Whackers, and Riparian Monitoring Stewards, but a variety of new programs are kicking off this year! Check out the new opportunities below and visit the related page on our website to learn more! Create an account on our online volunteer system, **MyImpactPage** and check off your program interests so we can get in touch with you when opportunities are available. If you have an account and see an opportunity that interests you, login to your **MyImpactPage** account and update your volunteer interests by clicking on “Additional Info” under the “Profile” menu.

are diverting water as intended and correct any issues that arise.

ReWilding Site Monitors (T, F, S)

Take part in monitoring our restoration sites and take notes using the ArcGIS digital app. Maintenance tasks could include adding additional tree cages, pruning, staking, flagging, weeding, and so much more!

Weed Watchers (T, F)

Invasive weeds are pervasive throughout Fish Creek Provincial Park, and we need your help to locate and remove them! Pair up with a teammate and use our digital app to note the location of invasives and remove these problematic plants.

Fish Creek Ambassadors (T, S, PIC/VSC)

Fish Creek Ambassadors will be volunteering in the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre providing information about Fish Creek Provincial Park and the Friends programs, as well as gathering information and data about how people use the Visitor Centre.

Stewardship Truck Crew (T, F)

With the addition of our stewardship truck, we will need helping hands to ensure our ReWilding sites are maintained, whether it be watering or fence maintenance! Make connections by working in a small team and provide direct assistance for the success of our ReWilding sites.

Qualifications and Training Requirements

T – training/orientation provided

F – flexible, once trained you can tailor shifts to fit your schedule

S – sign up for pre-scheduled shifts that work for you

WD – weekday shifts only

E&W – mostly evening and weekend shifts

PIC – Police Information Check required

PIC/VSC – Police Information Check/Vulnerable Sector

For more information and links to apply to volunteer, visit our [Volunteering Basics page](#). We look forward to working with you to bring the Friends' 2021 programs to life in Fish Creek!

Photo, Rotarians at a tree-wrap outing near Bankside on September 30.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM!

Did you know that there are many ways to support the Friends of Fish Creek? We are currently looking to add two new volunteers to our Community Action Team (CAT), the small but mighty group of volunteer champions who reach out to the community on our behalf, raising awareness about what we do and the opportunities that exist to support our work. CAT volunteers work together to steward existing relationships in the community and build new ones with prospective supporters. This process helps us to learn about the needs and interests of local businesses and how we might fulfill these through our programming and public recognition of their support.

Creating and enhancing important connections within the community not only results in crucial financial support for our organization, but also provides local groups with opportunities to support our work and give back to Fish Creek Provincial Park in meaningful ways.

CAT Champions, Angel Spasoff, Robert Bowman, Ian Richardson and Ron Deshayes are founding members of this team, and have taken the lead in finding event sponsorships for *Creekfest*, and *A Taste of Autumn*, as well as playing an important role in these events over last two years.

Graphic, Megan Rexazin on Pixabay.com. Photo, Karen Ratliffe

Thank you to the CAT volunteers for your hard work with the recent I ♥ Fish Creek online fundraiser, and thank you to everyone who donated. See page 7 for more information about the fundraiser.

If you are a people person, enjoy connecting with others, are knowledgeable about the Friends, and are

able to be an ambassador for us in the community, you could be a great addition to this team! Fundraising or fund development experience is not a requirement, but is definitely an asset. If you are interested in this position, please review the [Community Action Team Volunteer Job Description](#) and [complete the online application](#)



[form on our website](#) by **Monday, March 15.**

We will be holding informal phone interviews for this position, to ensure candidates meet the requirements for this important role. For more information, please contact Shana Barbour, Social Enterprise & Stewardship Manager at shana@friendsoffishcreek.org.

We are also currently looking for someone with a background in fundraising/fund development to join our Board of Directors. If you have some expertise in this area that you would like to share with us, please get in touch with Nic Blanchet, Executive Director, at nic@friendsoffishcreek.org.

CALGARY CAPTURED CONT'D



The Friends have enjoyed the unique opportunity to partner with the [Miistakis Institute](#) and other community partners on

white tailed and mule deer were captured the most, followed by coyotes and hares. The table on the previous page shows the full results, which can also be found on the [Calgary Captured website](#).



this project since 2018, with our volunteers playing a critical behind the scenes role to maintain the wildlife cameras in our park, and the classification of photos from their cameras through an online platform called Wildtrax.

Since the project started, over 1,800,000 photos have been captured by the remote cameras across the city. The species in each photo have to be identified, classified and validated by several volunteers, so – as you can imagine – this takes quite a bit of time! In the fall of 2020, a full year's worth of data analysis was shared by the [Miistakis Institute](#), highlighting the frequency of each species identification associated with the various parks across the city. Not surprisingly,

While Friends' volunteers have a big role to play in this program, and anyone can help out with the identification of wildlife through [Zooniverse](#) and be part of this important project! Simply go to [Zooniverse.org](#) and search for Calgary Captured, to begin identifying species. You can also go that extra step by clicking on the #talk button on the last screen before you submit your observation to let them know if you found something really great!

We are grateful to be part of this important work and partnership, along with the [Miistakis Institute](#), [Weaselhead/ Glenmore Park Preservation Society](#) and [Alberta Parks](#). Thanks to the [Calgary Foundation](#), [TD Friends of the Environment](#) and the [Alberta Ecotrust Foundation](#) for providing the critical financial support for this project!

Wildlife camera photos courtesy of Calgary Captured. Raccoon, moose and mule deer in Fish Creek. Black bear in Weaselhead.



Miistakis
Institute



TD Friends of the
Environment Foundation

QUIZ ANSWER - AUTUMN ISSUE

In what year, and where in Fish Creek Provincial Park, did the first Riparian Restoration project take place?

In 2013, the Friends worked with Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows and Fish) to complete a Riparian Health Inventory along the creek between Bridge 11 and the confluence with the Bow River. In October 2014, three restoration events were executed. Volunteers first dug post holes and erected posts for the signage. The volunteers then harvested willow, dogwood and poplar cuttings from other areas of Fish Creek, and finally they planted poplar seedlings and willow cuttings, spread mulch and installed informational signage.

STAFF

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2021 EXECUTIVE

Chair	Bob Morrin
Vice-Chair	David Mitchell
Treasurer	Phil Greer
Governance Chair	Henry Villanueva
Director at Large	Kari Horn
Director at Large	Naomi Parker
Director at Large	Christina Steed
Director at Large	David Breckon
Director at Large	Neil Groeneveld
Park Liaison	Jennell Rempel

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.