

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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CAPTURE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Explore Fish Creek Provincial Park this spring and show us your best park photos for a chance to win amazing prizes!



From beginning photographers to amateur professionals and youth, the Friends invite you to take part in our annual *Capture Nature* Photo Contest. Interpret and capture the beauty of Fish Creek through this year's exciting themes: Community, Forest for the Trees, Framing, and Leading Lines.

Are you up for the challenge? Photos can be submitted at any point during the contest, but the earlier the better! The public will be able to vote for their favourite photos through our online gallery, so early submissions will have more time to collect votes! The contest closes July 28 and voting will be open until August 15.

\$25 registration fee for adults, free for youth 17 years of age or under.

For more information or to register visit

<https://friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/capturenature>

Thank you to this year's contest supporters!



Graphics courtesy of Pixabay, photo courtesy of Tony LePrieur



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FISH CREEK STORY MAP

ENJOY A VIRTUAL HIKE IN FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

Since the July 2020 launch of our *Take a Virtual Hike in Fish Creek Story Map*, supported by the [Calgary Foundation](#), progress has been made to enhance conservation messaging and to make it easier to find information relating to accessibility for park visitors.

Through a new partnership with the [Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society](#), we have been working with Ian Mahon, [Canadian Wilderness Stewardship Program Intern](#), to create new content for the story map that focuses on informing visitors of simple ways to steward the park.

Our [new and improved Story Map](#) now features tips for safe and environmentally-responsible campfires, how to avoid contributing to trail widening, and even how to decrease disturbance and stress for wildlife when visiting the park.

Through a new fledgling partnership with the Kerby Centre, we are also adding accessibility information to the Story Map so that those with accessibility concerns can easily find helpful information such as the location



of accessible parking stalls, washrooms, locations of paired benches for proper social distancing, and the recently renovated accessible loop trail known as the [Cecile Buhl One Kilometre Experience](#), located near the Bow Valley Ranch. We have added a new accessibility tab so that all this info can be easily found in one place.

A big thank you to Ian Mahon, Nathan Campbell and the Kerby Centre for helping to keep this resource current and relevant during the pandemic, when the park is under increased daily pressure from ever-growing numbers of visitors.



THE FISH CREEK COMMUNITY SHOWCASE

Leonor Henriquez Leon is a new author, who has brilliantly recorded her journey through grief after the loss of her husband in her first publication, *Hopecrumbs*. Leonor is an inspired writer and a poet at heart, and has bravely chosen to share her experience with others. She is a strong proponent of the ability of nature to support emotional health and healing; in fact, much of her own healing was supported through her deep connection to Fish Creek Provincial Park. Leonor's book is available through the Friends' online store. Read more about *Hopecrumbs* at <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/fccs>

QUIZ QUESTION

Fish Creek Provincial Park is known as Canada's largest urban parks that surrounded by communities on all sides. How many kilometres does the park stretch from east to west?

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



Provincial Park Society

THE FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK PRESENTS

CREEKFEST Reimagined!



SATURDAY, JULY 17 - FRIDAY, JULY 23
FREE AND FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Experience the Friends of Fish Creek's signature summer time event – *Creekfest!* We are

pleased to bring all the magic of *Creekfest* to you over the course of one very special week through a variety of live and pre-recorded online presentations from partnering community-based organizations. This year *Creekfest - Reimagined!* will begin on Parks Day, July 17, and continue all week. This format will enable us to reach more people throughout the city, country and even internationally, than we could through our previous one-day event format.



The Friends will welcome back Peter Puffin's Whale Tales to *Creekfest – Reimagined!* A Juno-award winning children's performer and long-time supporter of the Friends of Fish Creek, Peter will once again perform a live virtual concert through Facebook and help the Friends raise awareness about *Creekfest – Reimagined!*

This virtual format will provide groups the opportunity to explore an issue and provide detailed information and insight about nature, wildlife, the environment and/or conservation. Community members can choose which presentations they would like to watch during *Creekfest – Reimagined!*, and of course its all free! Many of these offerings will be recorded and available for future viewing.

Creekfest is an important component to the Friends' Watershed Stewardship campaign, designed to raise awareness about nature, conservation, and healthy watersheds, and to invite community members to unite in celebration of Alberta's protected natural areas.

For more information, including a schedule of events, stay tuned to www.friendsoffishcreek.org/event/creekfest

Like Creekfest at www.facebook.com/creekfestinfishcreek



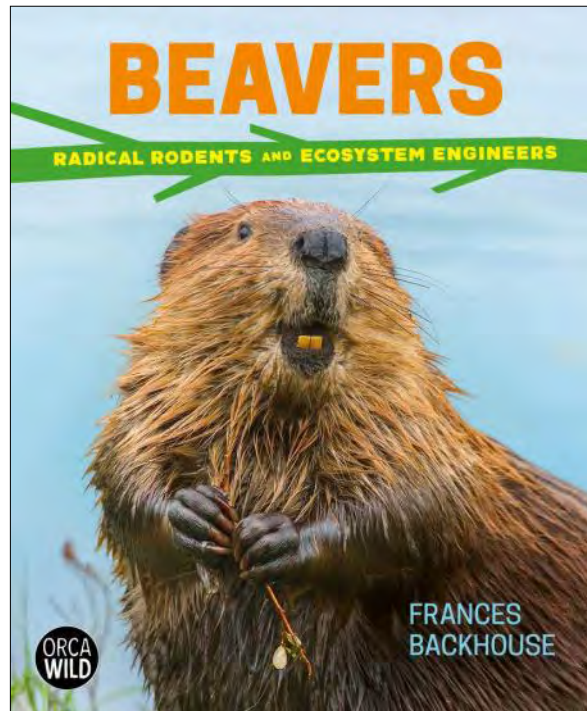
Foundation



VIRTUAL AUTHOR IN THE CLASSROOM

The Friends partner with Canadian author Frances Backhouse to bring beavers *into* the Classroom

The pandemic has brought about many challenges for everyone. One of these impacts has been the cancelling of all [Learning Naturally](#) field trips, which provide a full day of free, in-park environmental education for students from economically disadvantaged schools across Calgary. Luckily, the Friends of Fish Creek have come up with a creative plan to continue engaging youth to raise awareness about nature and beavers in the face of pandemic restrictions. By partnering with Canadian author Frances Backhouse, we are developing a curriculum-connected *Virtual Author in the Classroom* pilot project, for delivery to Grade 5 classes at ten Calgary schools this spring. Backhouse's new book, [Beavers: Radical Rodents and Ecosystem Engineers](#) is aimed at ages 9-12 and will serve as the focal point of this new programming. Her previous book,



[Once They Were Hats](#), was featured at the November 2020 Fish Creek Speaker Series.

Students will have the opportunity to experience a live and interactive virtual visit with the author, accompanied by activities that introduce the concepts in advance and extend the learning beyond the virtual visit, as well as activity ideas kids can bring home and do with their families.

We hope that this experience will allow students to develop a sense of appreciation for beavers and

bring their new knowledge and appreciation home to their families. Thanks to TD Friends of the Environment and the Harry & Martha Cohen Foundation for supporting the Author in the Classroom program.

See page 5 to learn how you can support the Learning Naturally program this year.



TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



Harry & Martha
Cohen
Foundation



New Funding in 2021 - Thank You to the Bow River Basin Council

Maximizing Impact Through Citizen Science and Technology

The Friends are pleased to announce that we have received funding from [The Bow River Basin Council](#) (BRBC). This funding will allow us to take what we learned through our 2020 Digital App Project and expand our scope of work as we take on new invasive species management projects in Fish Creek. BRBC financial support will support the planning and implementation of new vegetation management strategies that will address invasive species and areas of concern, including conducting rangeland health assessments, biocontrol releases and mowing and more!





Through the TD Learning Naturally program over 4,500 students between grades K - 6 from economically disadvantaged schools in Calgary are provided an unforgettable field trip in Fish Creek Provincial Park. Many of the students in the TD Learning Naturally program are from families that are new to Canada and their visit to the park is their first real introduction to nature in this country.

The Shaw Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink program (BFK) helps to support over 200 local children's charities each year between April and August. The Friends' Learning Naturally program has once again been chosen as a Birdies for Kids charity and we invite you to take advantage of this truly amazing opportunity to stretch your donation dollars even further! Through BFK your Learning Naturally donation will be matched up to 50% by the Shaw Charity Classic Foundation. A \$20 donation could translate into an unforgettable field trip for three children - imagine how many children would enjoy a field trip with a \$100 donation!

Unfortunately since the beginning of the pandemic there have not been field trips in Fish Creek, however the Friends are working on delivering educational programs virtually to students within their classrooms. When outdoor learning resumes in Fish Creek Provincial Park, your donations today will go a long way in helping provide unforgettable learning opportunities for children in this amazing park.

Consider asking your friends, family, co-workers and your employer about making a donation, as even the smallest contribution can have a significant impact.

Please donate before the closing of the Shaw Charity Classic on August 15. To contribute to the Learning Naturally program, please contact the Friends of Fish Creek or visit friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/birdies



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 walking and plein-air painting.



therapy to our community. Amarin is a certified yoga instructor and Nature and Forest Therapy guide, with many years of experience in the wellness realm. Her ability to help connect others to themselves and the natural world is unique and unmatched. [You can find out more about](#)

[Amarin through Experience Journeys website.](#)

We are most grateful for the generosity and commitment that these individuals have made this year, and for the opportunity it provides us to connect the community to the incredible gifts they have to share.

[Check out our website](#) for updates on program sessions and registration information.

Each year is a bit different, as we rely on the time and expertise of volunteer instructors to lead these programs. We are thrilled to have three Instructors returning this year; Divya Singh, who will be offering online meditation sessions; Annette Ng, coming back in her second year to offer a handful of outdoor recreation offerings, and Diana Young, our one and only Bungy Pump Instructor, joining us for a third season!

We would also like to welcome our newest Instructor, Amarin van Tighem, who will bring the practice of nature

In our efforts to continue to grow this program, please reach out if you have a background in wellness and would like to discuss working with us next year. Contact Shana Barbour, Social Enterprise & Stewardship Manager at shana@friendsoffishcreek.org.

SAIT ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY PRACTICUM STUDENTS

Three students from the SAIT Environmental Technology program took part in a week-long practicum with the Friends from April 6 - 9, to fulfill their program requirements. We were incredibly excited to have these students join us before the field season begins! During the week, they collected baseline data through our ArcGIS platform, marked poplars in the ATCO Heritage Grassland, monitored and mapped beaver activity and coexistence devices in Marshall Springs, and monitored restoration sites near the Bow Valley Ranch. They also cleaned up old fencing and signage at the Hull's Wood restoration sites. Thank you for your help!



WORKING WITH THE FISH CREEK COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT PARK CONSERVATION



A Sun Valley Drive Group member looks over a grassland overtaken by agricultural and invasive species.

Through partnerships with Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), the City of Calgary, the Alberta Invasive Species Council (AISC), the Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows and Fish) and Intricate Vegetation, the Friends of Fish Creek are pleased to announce that we

have developed a short term invasive species management plan, which has been approved by AEP for this year. The plan includes five pilot projects that we will be undertaking: tackling spotted knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe. spp micranthos*) in Lafarge Meadows; grassland management along Sun Valley Drive; scaling up activities in the ATCO Heritage Grassland; and training volunteers to identify, map, and pull Prohibited and Noxious invasive species throughout Fish Creek Provincial Park, with some teams trained specifically on Thesium (*Thesium ramosum*). This article will highlight our pilot project on Sun Valley Drive, SE.

Sun Valley Drive Project

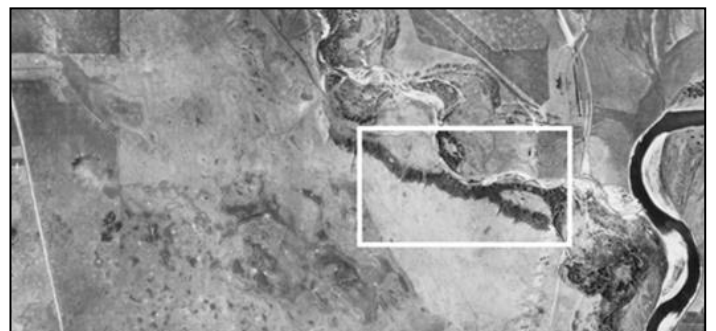
The community of Sundance is situated on the south east ridge of Fish Creek Provincial Park. The project area is a nearly flat “bench” overlooking the valley and the creek, and is approximately 2.43 hectares (6 acres) in size. It is bound by Sun Valley Drive on the south and native shrubs and aspen poplar forest to the north.

This land was historically used as farm land to produce

hay for grazing. Over the years, the area has become overrun with invasive weeds, including leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) and yellow toad-flax (*Linaria vulgaris*). Not only are they abundant along the bench, but they are beginning to spread down the north-facing slope, into the aspen forest. As a result, this area has become decadent with excess thatch and consequent low overall vegetation production. The dominant plant cover is smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), quackgrass (*Elymus repens*) and trace amounts of crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*).

In recent years, an active group of Sundance community members have voiced their concerns over the state of invasive species in this area, and have approached both AEP and the Friends in the hopes of working together to address the situation. The Sun Valley Drive Group (SVDG) is comprised of people who hold much knowledge and experience in rangeland health and land reclamation, and who are well connected in these sectors. They are a keen, energetic and well-resourced group, dedicated to working together to pilot vegetation management strategies to address the invasive species in this area.

-Cont'd on next page



Aerial photo mid 1920s with project area adjacent to Sun Valley Drive, located south of Fish Creek, inside the box. Photo shows the Bow River flowing from north to south, with the Fish Creek valley cutting through diagonally, towards the confluence at Hull's Wood (Photo credit: City of Calgary aerial maps archive).

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT CONT.

In consultation with our project partners, we have created a vegetation management plan for the grassland plot, which will be implemented in spring/summer 2021-22. Vegetation management strategies under consideration include mowing, biological control, goat grazing, manual pulling and chemical treatment of invasive species; a combination of these approaches is likely, based on the different site characteristics throughout the plot. The area will be digitally mapped before and after these strategies are implemented, providing us with the necessary baseline data against which we can measure the impact of our work over time.

Community Impact

The Sundance community is directly impacted by the invasive species spreading along the bench and the north boundary of the park. Not only are the weeds unsightly and impact the park visitor experience, but

invasive species will also spread onto community members' personal property. Abundant invasive species also negatively impact wildlife habitat by changing the availability of resources that animals need for their survival; this change in habitat means that residents also will not have the same connection to local wildlife that makes their community a special place to live. Managing the invasive species and creating a communications plan related to this project will help to engage and create awareness in the community about the issues at hand.

To find out how you can be involved as a volunteer for the Weed Whacker program or in other stewardship projects, please visit our volunteer webpage <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/volunteer-category/get-active/>. If you are interested in providing financial support or partner funding for this work, please contact Shana Barbour, Social Enterprise & Stewardship Manager shana@friendsoffishcreek.org

I LOVE FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK FACEBOOK GROUP

Dominique Fraser, Facebook Page Administrator



Are you looking to connect with other people in your community who just love Fish Creek and share a passion for the park? If you're on Facebook, come join our group called "I Love Fish Creek Provincial Park in YYC" Visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/168407094648092/>

We like to share photos about wildlife, sightings, path conditions and anything that's got to do with Fish Creek. With so many surrounding communities that back onto the park, many of us have spent countless hours, days and staycations here. Whether you like to run, bike, hike, walk, birdwatch alone or in a group, you can always find peace in joy in

our beloved Fish Creek Provincial Park. Fish Creek lovers like to take care of the park and take pride in having this little piece of heaven in our back yards. Won't you come join us and be part of the action!

Disclaimer: The I Love Fish Creek Facebook Group is an independent network of community members who share stories, photos and experiences relating to Fish Creek Provincial Park. The views and opinions expressed by group members on this page may not reflect the same views as the Friends of Fish Creek or Alberta Environment and Parks. The Friends are looking into ways of collaborating with the I Love Fish Creek Facebook group to enhance our messages of conservation and stewardship.

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 Weed Whackers, and Riparian Monitoring Stewards, but several programs are kicking off this year! Check out the 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.

FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK ONLINE STORE

Check out unique Friends of Fish Creek products online! All funds raised through the online store help the Friends enhance our message of conservation and environmental stewardship focused on this cherished urban park.

Support your park in style or pick up a gift for a friend!

New Items for 2021 -

- **Neck Tube** - Wear it as a scarf, headband, mask, hood, bandana, wrist wrap and many other possibilities. Featuring artwork inspired by *Autumn in Fish Creek*, the Friends 25th Anniversary signature painting by Jim Pescott, \$15.00
- **Long Sleeve Tees** - Features Word Cloud. 100% polyester jersey with wicking technology, \$20.00
- **Enamel Mugs** - Perfect for field work, camping or while watching your favourite shows, \$20.00 or 2 for \$30.00
- ***Hopecrumbs - Finding My Way Through Grief*** - The new book by Leonor Henriquez Leon, \$15.00. See page 2 for more information.



More items in stock

- **T-Shirt** - 100% Cotton, Royal Blue, available in S, M, L, XL, \$20.00
- **Cap** - 100% Cotton, tan with green embroidered brand on front and website on reverse, \$20.00
- **Travel Mug** - 14 oz, Stainless Steel with dual-wall, foam insulation and swivel lid, \$20.00

For more info on these and other amazing items visit <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/store>



Thanks to our generous donors and supporters, the Friends I ♥ Fish Creek fundraiser last November raised over \$13,000 for our stewardship and conservation efforts. Everything is better shared, so why not share the fun and excitement of team fundraising and support this year's annual fundraiser? Whether you are a new or long-time supporter, you can show your love for Fish Creek Provincial Park this autumn by creating a fundraising team and inviting your family and friends to donate.

It's easy to create a team and connect with your family, friends, colleagues or anyone else in your social network to join your fundraising efforts. To start your team, you will need to create an account in our fundraising platform, Kindful. From there, you will create your team fundraising page, which includes the opportunity to develop a mission statement for your team and tell us all a bit about your team and its members. As always, all donations raised will be used to support our education and stewardship initiatives that help to protect and conserve this beloved place.

Stay tuned to the Friends website in the coming months to learn more about starting your fundraising team.

STICK FORTS - IDLE PASTIME OR DEADLY THREAT?

Fish Creek Provincial Park is a cherished natural area that millions of community members enjoy visiting regularly, and since last spring, the park has experienced an unprecedented increase in users. Part of the reason for this area's appeal is the variety of fascinating and beautiful wildlife species that call this park home and can be seen regularly. Sometimes it can be easy to forget that we are the visitors here and it is the wildlife that lives here that depend on the park for their habitat and survival. Part of being a good park steward is recognizing this fact and respecting this area as home to animals, insects, plant life, and microorganisms.

In recent years an issue has been increasing in scope and frequency - the



construction of unauthorized stick forts. You have most likely seen these crude lean-tos and tipi shaped structures in the park. These are built by collecting deadfall and breaking branches off of trees and leaning them up against each other or binding the sticks together. One stick fort in Fish Creek will have a relatively-negligible impact on the park, but consider if hundreds of people continuously built forts out of deadfall in the park. Moving all of this natural material begins to alter the landscape and habitat for wildlife. This is the current situation in Fish Creek Provincial Park and the park's wildlife is being negatively impacted by these unauthorized structures.



These stick forts affect wildlife by altering the natural environment they are used to by the sudden creation of natural obstructions within their habitat that were not there previously. Last February, a great horned owl had been trapped in a stick fort and perished in the west end of Fish Creek. The owl flew into the fort and apparently could not get out. Possibly injured, it died from exposure and/or starvation. Although very sad and disappointing, it is most likely not the first time that wildlife has been killed or injured

due to a stick fort.

In addition to being detrimental to wildlife, stick forts can pose a danger to those who construct them in terms of falling branches, damage to eyes, or even punctures or lacerations due to rough, pokey and jagged branches. Park Watch stewards document these unauthorized structures and remove them when possible, but sometimes they are so large, intricate and well fastened together that park maintenance personnel are needed to dismantle them. Again, the dismantling of these stick forts poses an unnecessary danger for the folks tasked to do so.

The construction of stick forts negatively affects the park ecosystem and can even cause injury to humans and wildlife. It is up to all park visitors to be good stewards of the environment, part of which includes leaving deadfall in place and not damaging trees for the purpose of constructing stick forts. Please help the Friends to strengthen our message of conservation by letting others know that while it may seem harmless, stick forts pose a variety of negative impacts on the park. Let's all enjoy this breathtaking park and try to leave Fish Creek in the same or better condition than when entered it. Future generations will thank us.

Photos courtesy of Angel Spasoff and Alan Lam

QUIZ ANSWER - WINTER ISSUE

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 Woolen Mill launched?

Answer: After leaving England in 1883 with his family and settling here, Shaw set up their homestead, where they farmed and ranched along Fish Creek. Years later in 1883, Shaw launched his Woolen Mill, where they were able to produce three hundred pounds of wool a day.

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2021 EXECUTIVE

Chair	Bob Morrin
Vice-Chair	David Mitchell
Treasurer	Phil Greer
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Secretary	Kari Horn
Director at Large	Christina Steed
Director at Large	David Breckon
Director at Large	Neil Groeneveld
Director at Large	Michael McCreadie
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.