

What Do You Know... about Fish Creek?



**BOOK OF QUIZ QUESTIONS PRINTED
IN THE *VOICE OF THE FRIENDS*
NEWSLETTER FROM 2006 TO 2020**

A FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK PUBLICATION



Introduction

The Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society started almost thirty years ago in 1992 when a group of concerned citizens began working with Park management to address some of the issues facing Fish Creek Provincial Park. As Calgary's population increased over the years, the park began to experience more visitors than at any other time since opening in 1975.

The Friends of Fish Creek newsletter, *Voice of the Friends*, now in its 26th year of publication, features articles, interviews and updates on Friends' activities and programs in the park. Each issue of the newsletter includes a Quiz Question, designed to provide a little extra information about park history and wildlife. This eBook contains quiz questions and answers originally published in the *Voice of the Friends* newsletter between 2006 and 2020. We trust that you will enjoy reading about Fish Creek and increasing your knowledge about this amazing park that means so much to so many.

Quiz Questions are featured in 5 sections: Wildlife, Vegetation, History, About Fish Creek Provincial Park, and About the Friends.

At the time of printing all information was accurate. Sources and contact information included may be out of date. Each Quiz Question indicates the issue it was featured in and the information source if applicable. The Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society retains all copyrights in any text, graphics and images used in this document. Information cannot be reprinted or published without the express written approval of the Friends of Fish Creek.

Wildlife



This member of the weasel family is an animal whose existence in Calgary is believed to be only a myth by some people. What animal is it? Hint: Generally regarded as a scavenger, this animal wears a black and white face mask.

The masked scavenger is the raccoon. Although provinces like Ontario and Quebec may have a higher raccoon population, this animal can still be found in Calgary, despite its unsavory reputation. Raccoons have been spotted on the west end of Fish Creek Park near Woodbine. Nocturnal raccoons thrive in urban environments thanks to the abundance of garbage sources. The raccoon's appetite for both meat and vegetables allows them to eat almost anything. They have also been known to aggravate people with gardens because they can munch vegetables late at night and undetected. Native to parts of southern Canada and throughout most of the United States, they are social animals and may live in a group of up to 23 or more individuals. The raccoon has dexterous front paws and received its name from the Algonquin word "aroughcoune," which means "he scratches with his hands."

-July 2006

Photo: Maddy Misfeldt

This member of the canine family was once hunted for its fur, and killed off by farmers' traps and poison in such huge numbers that it could no longer be found in Canada. Recent breeding efforts have brought its numbers up slightly in this country. Do you know what animal this is? Hint - It currently lives on the prairies of Alberta and Saskatchewan, and along a central channel from the northern to southern United States.

It is the swift fox, who earned this name for its ability to run up to 60 km. The last documented swift fox was sighted in 1928 in Manyberries, AB, near the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. In the 1970s, some foxes were shipped from the United States, bred, and monitored, while reintroduction efforts were started by the federal government in the early 80s. These recent efforts have brought its population up slightly. The swift fox is considered an endangered species, is roughly the size of a house cat, and weighs approximately 2.5 kg. It hunts at night and will eat smaller mammals, birds, reptiles, plants, berries, and will scavenge alongside roads for animals killed by passing cars. The swift fox lives in prairie or hilly environments where it uses tall grasses and shrubs for cover when hunting. It will mate for life and give birth to approximately eight pups a year. Right now there is an estimated 200 individual swift foxes living on the Alberta/Saskatchewan prairies.

-Jan 2007

This amphibious, omnivorous mammal is native to North America and is a vital member of Fish Creek Provincial Park's wildlife community. Bigger than a rat and smaller than a beaver, it can be found in wetland environments, and although its population is classified as of "least concern" on the Conservation Status chart - meaning they are not threatened or near extinction - they may still be elusive and rarely seen. Can you guess what animal this is, and why it is rarely seen?

The correct answer is Muskrat. The muskrat, also known as the “water rat” or “swamp bunny,” is fortunate to not be overly trapped and hunted. However, this animal has been imported to Europe where its soft, lush fur has been used for coats and hats. It can cause problems to irrigation canals and is shot or trapped by landowners in the United States for being a pest. The muskrat may rarely be seen because it is nocturnal and is most active at dawn or dusk. The muskrat is not a scavenger but a hunter of frogs, mussels, crayfish, and turtles. A large part of its diet also consists of riparian vegetation. This adaptable predator is hunted by owls, coyotes, foxes, and lynx, from whom it can evade and remain underwater for up to fifteen minutes if needed. If you have seen muskrats in Fish Creek Park, or see one in the future, please email info@friendsoffishcreek.org and tell us where and when you saw it.

-Aug 2007. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muskrat>

This animal is a member of the feline family and is found throughout most of the United States, northern Mexico, and Southern Canada. It is approximately twice the size of a domestic cat. It will mark its territory by clawing trees and urinating and defecating in the area. Can you guess what it is? Hint: This feline is hunted both for its fur and for sport, and is identified by its striking facial features and black markings on its legs.

The feline in question is a bobcat. Over the past few years bobcats have increasingly been sighted in Fish Creek Provincial Park because of the good habitat and abundance in prey such as hares, squirrels, and fawns, as well as unattended free-ranging pets. Park visitors are sometimes alarmed when they see bobcats and confuse them with cougars. Cougars are bigger and more dangerous than bobcats because they may try to attack humans, whereas bobcats shy away from people. Also, cougars have a long tail and bobcats have a short, stubby tail. The bobcat is closely related to the lynx and the Latin name is *Lynx rufus*.

In the winter months, bobcats may be visible up in the trees, more so than at other times of the year. They typically hunt alone, can take down prey eight times their own weight, and will occasionally pounce on full-sized, unsuspecting deer. If you see a bobcat, do not be alarmed but give it plenty of space and respect.

-Nov 2007, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bobcat>, Fish Creek Provincial Park – Park Notes: Wildlife Encounters

This black and white bird is both an omnivorous hunter and scavenger, and is usually seen in groups of 6 to 10 individuals in urban environments and parks. Can you guess what bird species it is?

Hint: In the New Year's Day 2007 Bird Count, this member of the crow family, had the sixth largest population in Calgary, ranking after Geese, Goldeneye, Mallards, Bohemian Waxwings, and the Black-Capped Chickadees.

The magpie, or black-billed magpie, is an adaptable bird and like coyotes and rabbits, has learned to exist and flourish alongside humans. Magpies resemble crows but are smaller, and are mostly all black with white on the belly and on the undersides of wings. Also, the bird's black tails are longer than their bodies. They are usually seen in parking lots, on roadsides, in parks frequented by people, and near garbage collection sites. They may also be seen scavenging close to seagulls and crows, but will not contend with these larger birds for food. Magpies will eat berries, plants, insects, smaller birds and mammals, carrion, and human garbage. The magpie's loud cacophony of squawks can be abrasive to the human ear and for this reason the magpie is not considered a songbird. Magpies are visible all year round in Calgary and they can always be seen at the Bow Valley Ranch and other developed areas of Fish Creek Provincial Park.

-Feb 2008. Chris Fisher & John Acorn Birds of Alberta

The Wood Frog is Alberta's most prominent frog species and one of the earliest animals to wake up from hibernation in the spring. One of the neatest things about the Wood Frog is that during hibernation, it literally freezes solid. Do you know how the frog survives the harsh winter in this frozen state?

Wood frogs will find a dry place under a log or in thick vegetation to hunker down for the winter. When the temperature around the frog reaches approximately -2°C , the freezing process takes place. 65% of the water in the frog's skin and extremities turns to ice. Frozen water in the animal's body expands as the ice takes up more space than the water. Glucose levels in the animal's liver, heart, kidney and leg muscles are all increased. Some levels of energy production are increased by as much as 520%. When the outside temperature naturally increases in the spring, the frog defrosts. Ice in the frog's system melts and regular body activity resumes. Then the frogs congregate at wetlands to begin breeding. Researchers have found that after hibernation, the chemical lactate, or lactic acid, builds up in the frog's muscles, because of the high level of unconscious muscular exertion. Pretty soon these little guys will be waking up in the park and hopping over to a wetland near you.

- Apr 2008. <http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/AboutAmphibians.asp?am=5>,
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/w27132014776p23n/>

Is climate change increasing or decreasing the number of dragonflies in Alberta? Bonus Question: Will the Park's engineered wetlands increase or decrease the mosquito populations?

The dragonfly is one insect species that may have increased both in size and in numbers in Alberta in recent years. In this province during the past few summers we have seen both record heat and record precipitation.

Dragonflies have adapted many mechanisms to survive, such as the ability to seek out food, and will benefit from an increase in the mosquito populations in the park this summer. The engineered wetlands being constructed will increase mosquito populations, thus benefitting dragonflies. Climate change has resulted in global warming, a result of which could be an increase in insect populations and migrations worldwide. Temperature is one of the driving forces affecting insect survival, development, and movement. Global warming will continue to affect insect populations, possibly bringing swarms of non-native insects to new areas with devastating consequences.

-July 2008

Do you know the common name for the fish that may be found in the Bow River but is required to be thrown back if caught?

Hint: Other names for this fish include Mountain Char and Inland Char.

The correct answer is the bull trout, and this species has been deemed uncommon and sensitive, because its numbers have dropped dramatically as a result of overfishing. In addition to being really easy to catch, this fish's populations have been reduced because of habitat loss, stream disturbances, and reduced water quality due to pollution. The bull trout can be found in cold, clear rivers and lakes as well as in creeks which are fed by groundwater and contain a high level of oxygen. The best time to see bull trout spawning is in September and early October, and popular sites for this fish include the Smith-Dorrien Creek in K-Country, and the Highwood and McLeod Rivers. The average size for this fish is between 40 and 50 cm, and it weighs between 1 and 2 kg. The bull trout is a pale grey colour with red or pink spots, and is also Alberta's provincial fish.

-Sep 2008. Fish of

Alberta - Amanda Joynt and

Michael J. Sullivan

Graphic, clipart Pixabay



The skunk is a nocturnal animal that can be found in the Park and in surrounding neighbourhoods. What has been the reason for recent skunk-people conflicts?

Skunks are rarely seen during the day but are quite active at night. This urban wildlife species can be a real pest by digging in flowerbeds and gardens, eating garbage, and rooting through compost heaps in peoples' yards. When winter comes and vegetation, birds, and insects become sparse, they may go looking for food in peoples' yards and garbage cans. Also, meat, bones, and grease in peoples' garbage cans and composts can attract these animals. The skunk is a member of the weasel family, has very few natural enemies other than man, and can spray its vile musk up to 4 metres accurately. Skunks have also been known to root under porches where they can find darkness and shelter, and infest rural properties, where these animals have been trapped, killed, and eradicated. The skunk's black and white fur provides a visible warning to all would-be attackers, however, it can also blend in with shrubbery and be almost invisible in the darkness. So if you visit the park at night keep in mind that there could be a skunk within feet of you at any time.

-Nov 2008. <http://www.strathcona.ab.ca/Strathcona/Departments/Transportation+and+Agriculture+Services/Agriculture+Services/Pest+control/Skunks.htm>

Otters are one of the beaver's deadliest predators for their ability to enter beaver lodges and attack their young. In February of 2006, a fossil was found near China, representing the previously undiscovered biological link between the beaver and the otter. Do you know the Latin name given for this aquatic mammal that lived 165 million years ago?

The *Castorocauda lutrasimilis* was a beaver-like prehistoric mammal that shares characteristics of both the beaver and the otter.

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Like the beaver, it had a big, flat tail, and webbed feet for swimming. Unlike the beaver, and more like the otter, the *Castorocauda* mainly survived on fish, and at 1.5' in length, this animal was smaller than the modern-day beaver. *Castorocauda* was the largest living mammal at the time, and was the only mammal that was semi-aquatic. The Jurassic era began 165 million years ago, and at the time, most mammals lived on land, were small and rodent-like, ate insects, and mainly served as food for the much larger predators. It wasn't until 163 million years later, during the Pleistocene epoch, when the modern-day beaver's most recent ancestor, commonly referred to as the Giant Beaver, came to be. The Giant Beaver, *Castoroides ohioensis*, was an enormous 2.5 metres in length and weighed 100 kg. This huge rodent died off during the last ice-age but its fossilized remains have been found scattered throughout North America. Unlike its ancestor the *Castorocauda*, the Giant Beaver, had large incisors on its top and bottom jaws, a feature unique to beavers, and an appetite for wood rather than fish.

-Dec 2008/Jan 2009. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleistocene>
<http://carnegiemnh.org/news/06-jan-mar/022306caud.htm>

Deer can be found throughout the Park and their unique poise, silence, and beauty is captivating to all visitors. Of the Mule deer and the Whitetail deer, do you know which one is the native species?

The mule deer is the species native to western North America, and its population ranges from southern Yukon and Alaska to northern Mexico. The mule deer has large ears (like a mule or donkey), a darker forehead, short black-tipped tail and large white rump. The whitetail deer is the non-native deer species in the park, and in comparison, has smaller ears and a thick white tail. The whitetail population spread from the eastern part of the continent within the past 50-60 years, and it is possible that the whitetail now outnumbers the mule deer in the park.

There are two ways to tell these deer apart from a distance; if you can see a bright white tail sticking up like a flag, it is a whitetail deer. These deer can also be differentiated by the way they flee a predator; the whitetail deer tend to run up hill and the mule deer will tend to run down hill.

-Feb 2009. <http://talkaboutwildlife.ca/profile/index.php?s=504>

Can you guess what breed of woodpecker is frequently found in the Park, and may be easily identified by the bright red plumage on its head?

The Pileated Woodpecker lives along the eastern and western United States and throughout Canada. The male of the species has a red head and neck while the female has a red head with a black neck, and typical of birds, the male is more flamboyant and colourful. It prefers boreal forest areas, is not found in extreme hot or cold regions of North America, and is also known as "Indian hen" or "rain crow". It is a very productive member of the park's wildlife community and does several things that contribute to a healthy Park environment. For example, it bores large rectangular holes in trees when it searches for insects, then these holes are later used by other birds searching for food. Pileated woodpeckers will also move away from their nests and seek out new trees to inhabit; leaving habitat space for other wildlife. However, because this bird is always pecking at trees and drilling holes in them, trees can eventually die or become too damaged to stand and possibly fall over.

-Apr 2009. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pileated_woodpecker

Squirrels are one of the most widely seen members of the Park's wildlife community. Between the red squirrel and the grey squirrel which species is not native to Alberta?

The red squirrel is native to Alberta, while the grey squirrel, also known as the Eastern Grey, is the non-native species. In the early 20th century, the Calgary Zoo released several grey squirrels from captivity and since then this species has been thriving throughout residential neighborhoods and the city's natural areas. The grey squirrel is frequently seen in and around the Bow Valley Ranch and Sikome in the eastern section of the Park, while the red squirrel has a very healthy population in the boreal forests of the west around Bebo Grove and Shannon Terrace. The grey squirrel is about 10-15 cm longer, and 200 grams heavier than the red squirrel. These tiny animals are hunted by bobcats, hawks, owls, skunks, weasels, raccoons, and even cats. The grey squirrel has a reputation as a pest because it will typically invade peoples' gardens, sheds, garages, attics, and garbage cans in search of food. The red squirrel will not venture as far into inner-city areas as the grey squirrel will, but it does seek out food in yards that border natural areas like Fish Creek Provincial Park.

-June 2009. talkaboutwildlife.ca/profile/?s=565, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Squirrel

This animal has been spotted occasionally in the west end of the Park and derived its name from the Algonquian word “moz,” which means twig eater. What animal is it?

If you guessed moose, that is correct. The moose is the largest member of the deer species and in addition to black bears, the largest animal in the park. Moose enter the park through the wildlife corridor in the west end near Shannon Terrace. Although these animals are herbivores, they can be dangerous to people, partially due to their ferocity in protecting their young and their enormous size. Moose stand 7' at shoulder height and weigh over 1500 lbs. Unfortunately, male (bull) moose are a prized game animal due to their impressive rack, and the moose's antlers can span up to 5' across.



While the bull moose has no natural predators, young moose may be hunted by wolves, cougars, and black bears. The female (cow) can be hunted and killed by a pack of wolves. If you are lucky enough to see a moose in the Park, use the opportunity to take a few photos from a distance and give the

animal plenty of space.

-Aug 2009. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moose>. Photo: Anne Elliott

Although Fish Creek Provincial Park is home to several species of owl; which type of owl is known as the smallest in the Park, and one of the smallest in North America?

The northern pygmy owl is the smallest owl species in Fish Creek Provincial Park and has been seen and photographed during the winter months near Shannon Terrace. One admirable thing about all birds is that they are hunters, and the pygmy owl is known as one of the most effective hunters in the wildlife community. The tiny northern pygmy owl, whose average size is 16 cm, is a fierce predator who consumes 60% rodents and 37% smaller birds, and has also been known to eat squirrels, toads, and larger birds like wood peckers. The pygmy owl inhabits open meadows that are still close to wooded areas. This open spaces help the tiny owl to see both prey, and other predators, such as a variety of hawk species. The resourceful northern pygmy owl does not migrate during the winter months nor does it build a nest. It will lay 3 or 4 eggs a time, three times a year during the spring. Habitat includes the western part of the continent between Alaska and Central America.

-Nov 2009. http://www.abheritage.ca/abnature/speciesatrisk/pygmy_owl_intro.htm

Alberta Watchable Wildlife: Owls, Alberta Environmental protection – Fish and Wildlife

Which member of the Park's wildlife community can be very damaging to the Park environment but is also significant to the history of this country?

The animal in question is the beaver; a widespread native species that helped develop the economy in the 17 and 1800s in the areas where Calgary and Fish Creek Provincial Park now sit. During the 1800s, the Hudson's Bay Company had a successful outpost in the area where the city of Edmonton now sits, and was instrumental in developing the economy in the western part of the country. After the native bison species had been over-hunted, business continued with the Hudson's Bay Company and deer, moose, rabbit, and bear all provided hunters and trappers with lucrative business opportunities. But it was the beaver pelts that were in highest demand in countries like England and France for their warmth and aesthetic appeal. A beaver pelt has two layers of fur, a coarse outer layer and a softer inner-layer, both of which provide this amphibious mammal with ample protection from the ice-cold waters it may inhabit, so this fur provided the user with substantial warmth. In 1875, during the economic boom, Fort Calgary was set up by the North West Mounted Police where the Elbow River meets the Bow River, and was established to help maintain order following the influx of American bootleggers and the sale of alcohol in the area.

-Jan 2010. <http://www.discovercalgary.ca/history/>

www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index

compagniebahudson.ca/hbcheritage/history/places/stores/edmonton.asp

Fish Creek Provincial Park is home to a variety of wildlife species, which animal has caused quite a stir in recent years and has been mistaken for both a housecat and a cougar?

The bobcat; the number of bobcat sightings in and around Fish Creek Provincial Park has increased in recent years. Park visitors are sometimes alarmed when they see a bobcat and may confuse it with a lynx, cougar, or large housecat. In the winter months, the best place to spot a bobcat in Fish Creek is up in a tree. The bobcat, *Lynx rufus*, can be recognized by its short, stubby tail, and is closely related to the lynx. Bobcat tracks have been seen in the west end of the park and this animal has also been recorded by the park's wildlife cameras. Bobcat tracks are twice as large as those of a domestic cat and are similar to those of a dog or coyote. The park environment provides these adaptable hunters with an abundance of prey including wildlife like hares, squirrels, fawns, and birds. Occasionally frogs, snakes, and free-ranging pets may also become food for the bobcat. In the park this animal needs to look out for predators like coyotes, and throughout its range, is preyed on by wolf, bear, and cougar. Typically the bobcat will shy away from humans and if you see a bobcat do not be alarmed, just give the animal plenty of space and respect.

-Feb. 2010

**The sight of this animal usually means that Spring has officially begun.
Which bird is reputedly known as the Bird of Spring?**

The American Robin, which may also called the red-breasted robin, is 23–28 cm in length with a wingspan of 31–41 cm. It weighs approximately 77 grams. The robin has a black head and brown wings, a white throat, and a bright reddish-orange breast that it puffs out when standing and is clearly visible when in flight. The robin has a very pleasant song that people enjoy and the robin is one of the first birds to begin singing in the morning. The robin can be found throughout North America, but only in the greater part of Canada during the spring and summer. It lives year-round throughout the southern United States and along the BC Coast. During the winter months, the robin can be found in Mexico and will venture further south.

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People enjoy the lively blue colour of the robin's egg and "robin's-egg blue" is a popular shade for both interior and exterior house paint. The robin can be seen running across mowed lawns where the grass has been cut short, to hunt for worms, which it spots using its excellent vision. The robin also eats grasshoppers, ants, beetles, fruits, and berries.

-Apr 2010. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_robin

How long does the meadow vole typically live in the wild?

The meadow vole, also commonly called the field mouse or meadow mouse, lives approximately one year in the wild. The meadow vole acts as prey for larger predators like garter snakes, coyotes, fox, bobcat, and birds of prey like owls and hawks. Because the meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) is quite small; approximately 16 cm in length and only 50 grams in weight, its primary defense mechanism is to run and hide from predators. Like most rodents, it is a herbivore and will eat grasses and tree bark. Fish Creek Provincial Park is home to meadow voles. They inhabit grassland areas such as those around Mallard Point, Bankside, the Bow Valley Ranch, and Glennfield. The meadow vole is rarely seen by humans in the Park but, like garter snakes, it may be heard rustling in the underbrush just beside the Park's pathways.

-July / Aug 2010. wikipedia.org/wiki/Meadow_Vole
tpr.alberta.ca/parks/fishcreek/wldspchek.asp

How many species of snake are there in Fish Creek Provincial Park?

There are two snake species in the Park; the wandering garter snake and the red-sided garter snake. The wandering garter snake is also known as the common garter snake and the red-sided has bright red scales along its sides.

Garter snakes are harmless to people but secrete venom to paralyze their prey, which includes invertebrates, fish, tadpoles, frogs, salamanders, worms, birds, mice and other small mammals. While most garter-snakes are small, some can be up to 30 cm in length. Thanks to the warm weather we've been having this fall, they may still be spotted along the trails.

-Oct / Nov 2010

Seeing wildlife in the park can be very exciting. Which carnivore is most likely to be spotted in the park in the early morning or just after the sun goes down?

The animal in question is the coyote, which is usually spotted at dawn or at dusk, and mainly inhabits grassland areas like Mallard Point, Sikome, and Glennfield. Usually seen alone, Coyotes hunt small mammals like mice and ground squirrels, but may also eat snakes, small birds, and deer. The Park's coyote population is fairly healthy due to the large abundance of prey and virtually no natural predators. Although coyotes may be mistaken for large dogs, a unique identifying marker is the large bushy tail. If you are fortunate enough to see a coyote in the Park or elsewhere, treat it with respect and give the animal plenty of space.

-Feb 2011

Which small bird has a complex seed-hiding habit, and can usually be found singing in the trees at the Bow Valley Ranch?

The songbird in question is the black-capped chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*.) It is one of the smallest birds in North America and has an average length of 5.3" with a wingspan of 7.3". Its loud, shrill chirps are actually a complex warning and identification system. This bird hides seeds and other food sources to be retrieved later, and can remember

Each year in the fall, brain neurons containing old information die and are replaced with new neurons, which enables the bird to adapt to societal and environmental changes. In spite of park rules, some people feed chickadees and other birds. This summer, enjoy the park and its wildlife but please do not feed birds.

-June / July 2011. allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-capped_Chickadee/lifehistory

Which Park mammal has a very distinctive appearance and lives a mostly solitary life ?

The unique loner in question is the porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*). This nocturnal rodent lives in both forested and parkland areas, and like the beaver, the porcupine has been known to damage trees by rubbing up on them and eating the wood. They have also been known to chew on leather, bones and antlers as a way of filing down their teeth. When threatened, porcupines can make their quills stand up and even flick their large tails, projecting loose quills at their predators. Porcupines have been known to defend themselves against animals much larger than themselves, including domestic dogs. Fall is the porcupine's mating season so they may be more active now than at other times of the year. If you are fortunate enough to see a porcupine, give the animal plenty of space and do not approach it.

-Nov 2011. <http://www.hww.ca>

Most birds fly south in the winter, but can you name one bird species that visits us in the winter?

One of the winter visitors is the bohemian waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulous*). During the winter months these birds can be seen in large flocks feeding on fruits and berries in urban centres and residential neighbourhoods.

During the summer and most of the year, this bird lives in areas of boreal forest, feeds on vegetation and flying insects, and are seldom seen. Although the bohemian waxwing is fairly small (approx. 20 cm in length) it is quite colourful. This bird has a black eye “mask,” a cinnamon coloured head with a white tuft, red under-tail with bright yellow and black tail band, as well as black, grey and white wings with red and yellow spots on them. The cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulous*) is related to the Bohemian and aside from their yellowish colour and a slightly smaller size, these two birds look almost the same. Although the cedar waxwing migrates during the winter, individual birds can sometimes be seen within flocks of the bohemian waxwings. Both species can be found in Fish Creek Provincial Park at different times of year, so keep your eyes open for these unique looking birds.

-Feb 2012. Birds of Alberta-Chris Fisher, John Acorn.

Park Notes - Birds in the Park.

Which member of the park’s wildlife community is sometimes called the little brown myotis and why ?

The little brown bat is sometimes called the little brown myotis because its latin name is *Myotis lucifugus*. It is estimated there are between 1 million and 1.5 million individual bats in this province and it has the largest and most widespread population of any bat species in Alberta and across North America. The little brown bat can adapt to different environments and will frequently roost on manmade structures in urban locations. It is the smallest bat species in this province, with an average weight of 8.5 grams and a maximum wingspan of 20 cm. Fish Creek Provincial Park makes a perfect home for the little brown bat because the park’s wetlands provide them with a food source and the buildings and other structures in the park provide them with places to roost. Although bats can carry diseases like rabies, they provide a very useful service to people; they eat mosquitoes and wasps.

-May 2012. www.srd.alberta.ca

Do you know which bird species was first seen in Alberta approximately 9 years ago and is a member of the pigeon family?

The bird in question is the Eurasian collared-dove. Originally native to India this bird eventually spread through countries like Turkey and into Europe. In the 1600s, colonization brought this bird to the Bahamas and the Caribbean. In the 1970s a few of these birds escaped the islands and from Florida they spread throughout North America. Like the more common rock pigeon, this bird is highly adaptable. It is a threat to our ecosystem because it can out compete and displace other bird species. The Eurasian collared-dove is larger than the mourning dove, slimmer than a rock pigeon and with a longer tail. It is a light brown to gray-colour with white patches in the tail. This bird received its name due to its origins and the black feathers around its neck that resemble a collar. It is not known if this new arrival will have a substantial impact on Fish Creek Provincial Park.

-Sep 2012. texasinvasives.com allaboutbird.com

The tiger salamander is an important member of the park's wildlife community. Do you know how this amphibian survives during the winter months?

The tiger salamander hibernates during the winter and will begin to do so when the average temperature drops below 5-10°C. During the winter they find moist mammal burrows to use, bury themselves deep in the earth or hide in areas below the frost line. During hibernation their heart rate and metabolism are significantly reduced. The silent and nocturnal tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*) can be green, black, brown and/or grey in colour. It received its name due to the striped pattern along the outside of its body that can vary between individuals of the same species. A fully-grown tiger salamander is 15-24 cm in length and weighs approximately 125 g. In Fish Creek, they may be preyed upon by fish, birds and small mammals. >

Like other amphibians, tiger salamanders act as an indicator species of the environmental health of a particular area.

-Dec 2012/Jan 2013. www3.northern.edu www.seaworld.org a-z-animals.com

Which of these bird species that you might see in Fish Creek is not a woodpecker: the northern flicker, the white-winged crossbill, or the yellow-bellied sapsucker?

The correct answer is the white-winged crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*). The crossbill is part of the finch family, which are generally smaller birds than woodpeckers. The crossbill ranges in size from 15 – 17 cm, while woodpeckers range in size from the downie wood-pecker at 15 cm, to the pileated woodpecker at 48 cm. Unlike woodpeckers, that generally have a long skinny bill for grubbing out insects from inside of trees, the bill of white-winged crossbill is asymmetrical and the top part crosses over the bottom at the tip. This bird's bill is designed for prying open spruce cones to eat the seeds inside. The white-winged crossbill inhabits primarily spruce-fir forested areas and deciduous forests, and can be spotted in the west end of Fish Creek near Bebo Grove and Shannon Terrace.

-Apr / May 2013. Birds of Alberta - Fisher, Acorn

Which member of the finch family is sometimes mistaken for a robin in the winter time and why?

The male pine grosbeak is sometimes mistaken for the robin, a sign that spring has arrived, when heard singing its short, musical warble and seen perched in a spruce or fir tree, its red colour a bright contrast to the snow. The pine grosbeak (*pinicola enucleator*) is a small bird, 20- 25 cm in length, that you may see in Fish Creek Provincial Park. This bird can be seen in areas of spruce forests, or near residential neighbourhoods and backyard bird feeders.

The mature male pine grosbeak has a bright red plumage on its head, back, breast and wings, while the female is mostly grey and rusty-yellow. The pine grosbeak feeds on buds, berries and seeds, forages on the ground, and will visit feeding stations in the winter. This bird is typically seen during the late fall, winter and early spring, and some years it may be abundant while sparse in other years.

-Aug / Sep 2013. Birds of Alberta - Fisher, Acorn. Fish Creek Bird Checklist

Which member of the weasel family has recently been seen in the Votier's Flats area of Fish Creek?

The least weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) has recently been seen in the Votier's Flats area. It can vary in length from 11– 26 cm with a tail that measures between 1.2 – 8.7 cm. The least weasel can be found throughout most of Canada, north east United States, Europe and northern parts of Asia. Depending on its location, during the winter months, their fur is white, and in the summer months the fur can be brown or a sandy colour. The least weasel is a master of disguise and like many smaller animals, hides from predators by blending into the surroundings. In Fish Creek the least weasel has to look out for foxes, eagles and owls, and it will feed mainly on smaller rodents like mice and voles. The weasel may also prey on young rabbits in the spring and will consume approximately 35 grams of food daily, or 30–35% of its total body weight. These fascinating and unique animals are an important part of the park's wildlife community.

-Dec 2013 / Jan 2014. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Least_weasel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Least_weasel)

Which animal was recently seen at Shannon Terrace, and whose emergence is an indicator that Spring is on the way?

The first Richardson's ground squirrel reported in Fish Creek this year was on March 17 near the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre at Shannon Terrace, 5 days earlier than last year's first sighting. Ground squirrels, also called gophers or flickertails, live mainly in the south western parts of Canada and north western parts of the United States. Human activity like deforestation, farming and the construction of urban centres have assisted this rodent in increasing its range. Like some mammals, ground squirrels hibernate during the winter and that is why their emergence indicates the beginning of spring. While ground squirrels may appear endearing, they are wild animals, must be respected as such, and should not be fed or harassed. This spring, please respect this and all members of the park's wildlife community.

-Apr / May 2014. facebook.com/AlbertaParks Wikipedia.org

Can you name 2 differences between the American crow and the common raven, two members of the crow family with black feathers that can be found in Fish Creek Provincial Park?

Two of the most easily recognizable differences between these birds are the plumage and the size. The larger raven (*corvus corax*) is 61 cm in length with a wingspan of 127 cm, while the crow, whose Latin name *corvus brachyrhynchos* means "raven with the small nose," is slightly smaller at 43 - 53 cm in length with a wingspan of 94 cm. The crow's feathers rest close to its body and the crow has an overall smooth appearance, much like the magpie, while the feathers of the common raven are scruffier, especially around the head, neck, legs and wings. Location can also help identify these birds because crows inhabit urban environments while ravens prefer rural areas, town sites and campsites. The Shannon Terrace and Bebo Grove areas of Fish Creek are ideal for both species due to the abundance of food, fresh water, and because the park is both an urban and natural environment.

-Aug / Sep 2014. Fisher, Acorn - Birds of Alberta

Which male waterfowl species, a member of the duck family, is readily identifiable by its large black and white head? HINT: This bird wears a “hood.”

If you guessed the hooded merganser you are correct. The male of the species has a large black and white head and the female has less flamboyant but also striking reddish-brown plumage on the head. The name merganser means fish eating duck, but this waterfowl also feeds on amphibians, snails, crayfish and dragonfly larvae. Slightly smaller than the redbreasted merganser and the common merganser, the hooded merganser (*lopodytes cucullatus*) is usually seen in similar numbers and locations alongside the slightly larger common merganser. The late autumn, winter and early spring are the best times of year to see a hooded merganser. The hooded merganser is one of the most visually appealing and sought after birds for nature photographers. In recent years, the hooded merganser has been seen at Beaverdam Flats, Carburn Park, Ellistone Park, Irrigation Canal, as well as near the Boat Launch and the ecologically diverse Lafarge Meadows area of Fish Creek Provincial Park.

-Apr / May 2015. Fisher, Acorn - Birds of Alberta, Yaki - Birding Course Reports
Photo, Ken Pride



Which animal was called *iinii* by the Blackfoot people? (pronounced Eennee)

The bison was called *iinii* and *iiniiwa*, by the Blackfoot, and these peoples' survival depended on this enormous animal. The Blackfoot lived in the area where Fish Creek exists today, and their territory spanned large sections of Alberta and Canada, long before provincial and national borders were established. They would call upon the Great Spirit - *Napi* (pronounced Na pee) to send them bison to hunt. The native peoples used buffalo pounds and buffalo jumps to hunt for bison. Following the kill, they efficiently and respectfully utilized all parts of the animal including bones, fur, innards and droppings. They continued using bison jumps in the Fish Creek valley until the 1700s, and while they hunted other animals, the size and versatility of the bison provided essential means to support their society.

-Feb / Mar 2016. Albertapark.ca native-languages.org



Photo,
Lori Mainland

The Bobcat is one of the most captivating and least seen members of the park's wildlife community. Can you name 2 reasons why bobcats are not frequently seen in the park?

>

Bobcats are solitary animals, unless with kittens, and unlike deer or chickadees bobcats are not seen in groups. Another reason they are not frequently seen in the park is because they are not very large, and are only slightly larger than a housecat. Bobcats rest and hunt by perching in tree branches or under tree boughs and remain motionless for long periods of time. Their spotted black and white fur also acts as a camouflage. Bobcats are most active at dusk or dawn when the park is not as busy, and the uneven lighting at these times can help to conceal them. If you live near Fish Creek or other natural area, you may have seen bobcats in your neighbourhood.

-April / May 2016. S2G+ Preservation Society

Which 2 distinct but similar mammal species in the park can successfully breed, thus producing hybrid offspring?

If you guessed the white tail and the mule deer, you are correct. These two species generally inhabit different areas, mate at slightly different times of year, and produce mating scents that are indecipherable to each other. Hybrid deer are quite rare, and do not have a long life span due partially to different and internally conflicting practices for evading predators. In Fish Creek, where deer have very few to no natural predators, this may not be an issue. A hybrid may look like a mule deer, but with a tail similar to that of a white tail's that is dark on top and white underneath. The ears of a hybrid are larger than those of a white tail but smaller than those of a mule deer. If you see a deer in Fish Creek that you think may be a hybrid, please send in your photos to info@friendsoffishcreek.org

-Aug / Sep 2016. www.coueswhitetail.com

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

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

-Feb / Mar 2017. www.canadiangeographic.ca Birds of Alberta, Fisher

What are some ways that beavers help to improve water quality and increase biodiversity?

While beavers can be problematic in urban parks, in more natural ecosystems beavers are incredibly beneficial to other wildlife. Beavers help to distribute water and increase areas of fresh, clean water, and help filter water that passes through their dams. Sediment is trapped behind their dams, which improves water quality and results in nutrient rich soil. Beavers create wetland habitat which supports a variety of wildlife species, such as birds, mammals, and fish that benefit from deep pools of water created by the construction of their dams. Even after beavers leave an area, the surface water remains and benefits other local wildlife species. One of the beaver's natural predators is the grizzly bear, so increased beaver populations may also help to increase grizzly bear populations.

-Aug / Sep 2017. Cows and Fish

In March of this year, which member of the park's wildlife community was found wandering in the Shawnessy area?

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On the morning of March 30, City Police received a call about a moose in the Shawnessy Superstore parking lot. The area was fenced off from nearby Macleod Trail, which helped protect morning commuters as well as the young female moose. Wildlife like moose will sometimes enter neighbourhoods surrounding green spaces like Fish Creek Provincial Park to feed on ornamental shrubs in peoples' yards. Alberta Fish and Wildlife Officers managed to tranquilize the animal just before 9am and she was safely relocated to Kananaskis Country. If you see a moose in your neighborhood in a dangerous situation, please call 911. For non-emergency moose sightings please call Alberta Fish and Wildlife at 1-800-642-3800 .

-Oct / Nov 2017. cbc.ca calgaryherald.com calgary.ca

Which breed of Woodpecker is the smallest and most common during the winter months?

The Downey is the smallest breed of Woodpecker, and at only 15 - 18 cm in size, it is slightly larger than another winter resident, the boreal chickadee. Like the chickadee, the downey is also black and white, however males are readily identified by a red splash of colour on their head. The downey woodpecker is common year-round and can be observed in wooded areas throughout most of Canada and the US. This bird has been spotted around the city and in many different regions of Fish Creek Provincial Park, including Bankside, the Bow Valley Ranch, and Votier's Flats. For such a small bird, it can be very loud when calling out or hammering into trees looking for dormant insects. Sign up for the Winter Birding Course starting January 8 to learn about the downey woodpecker and many other bird species who inhabit and pass through this park in the winter.

-Dec 2017 / Jan 2018. Birds of Alberta, Chris Fisher and John Acorn

Fish Creek Provincial Park has a very healthy population of white-tailed and mule deer, which are seen regularly in and around the park. Typically how many deer fawns are born each spring?

Both deer species will give birth to 1 or 2 fawns per year in the spring. In the months of June and July these young fawns can be seen exploring the park, usually with mother nearby. Mule deer habitat includes hilly and forested areas and they feed on shrubs, including aspen and willow. White-tailed deer inhabit aspen groves, wooded river flats, valleys and ravines. As autumn arrives, the young deer begin to mature and may be seen in groups of seven or more. Although similar in appearance, mule deer can be identified by their large mule-like ears and white-tailed deer by their smaller ears and pointed white tail. The Autumn Birding Course starting September 3 provides amazing opportunities to not only learn about birds, but to also learn about deer and other wildlife.

-Aug / Sep 2018

Which bird species was featured on page 1 of the Oct/Nov 2018 newsletter?

The bird is the pileated woodpecker and it was photographed by Shirley Otway. This is the largest of the woodpeckers and measures between 41 - 48 cm in length. Usually a solitary bird, the Pileated Woodpecker has been spotted in the Burnsmead, Votier's Flats, Bebo Grove, and Bow Valley Ranch areas of Fish Creek, as well as in Griffith Woods Park, Weaselhead, and Carburn Park. Its habitat includes mature mixed forests and areas with dead or dying trees. These birds are easily identifiable because they are mostly black, with a white neck, bright red crest on their head, and a long pointed beak, perfectly designed for boring holes in trees and digging out tasty ants, beetles, berries and nuts.

A rectangular hole, about the size of a fist, found at the base of a dead tree is a good indication that one of these birds was feeding in that area.

-Dec 2018 / Jan 2019. Birds of Alberta, Fisher and Acorn

Which carnivorous mammal is related to the otter and weasel, and lives in the prairies and throughout the US and Mexico?

The American badger, a fossorial (burrowing) carnivore is the largest member of the Mustelidae family. This stalky animal is an expert at digging and tunnelling, has small ears, a pointy snout and long claws. Badgers measure between 76 to 89 cm in length, and weigh between 5.4 kg - 9.1 kg. Habitat includes grassland areas, agricultural areas, and forested areas. Badgers live underground and dig elaborate networks of tunnels and dens up to 10 metres deep. The badger prefers to eat small rodents but will also feed on small birds, eggs, reptiles, and amphibians. The American badger is considered an endangered species due to reduced breeding area caused by habitat fragmentation. Learn more about badgers on June 19 at the Fish Creek Speaker Series "Badgers in your Backyard – A Glimpse into the Ecology of an Important Grassland Predator," presented by Nicole Heim, M.Sc, Local Wildlife Ecologist.

-June / July 2019. naturecanada.ca/discover-nature/endangered-species/american-badger

This finch-like bird is mostly grey, brown and white but has vibrant yellow plumage at the base of the tail and on the wings. Can you identify this bird?

The correct bird is the Pine Siskin. The Pine Siskin is one of the smallest of the finches at only 11-13 cm in size.

Although this bird does resemble a sparrow and may act like a goldfinch, its yellow plumage and loud distinctive call provide evidence of its identity. The Pine Siskin frequents natural wooded areas, grasslands and meadows as well as man-made areas like roadways and agricultural sites. This energetic bird has been seen in Shannon Terrace in Fish Creek Provincial Park, Carburn Park, Griffith Woods Park and South Glenmore Park. The Pine Siskin is generally seen in groups of



10 - 15 birds, but has also been seen in the hundreds. Learn more about the Pine Siskin and many other birds through the Spring Birding Course beginning March 30.

-Winter 2020. Birds of Alberta, Fisher and Acorn. Photo: Daniel Arndt

Which member of the park's wildlife community has a very distinct appearance and a powerful defense mechanism?

If you guessed the skunk, then you are correct. At first glance under the moonlight, this nocturnal animal can easily be mistaken for a puffy black housecat, especially if seen in a neighbourhood near the park. However, the unique and prominent white stripe down its back identifies it as the skunk. Although the skunk has claws for digging and rooting for food, and while it can move at a brisk pace when needed, it is not an exceptionally quick or aggressive animal. When faced with a predator the skunk's best defense is to stand its ground and unleash its potent musk into the predator's face, which comes out from two glands near the anal opening as a liquid and then becomes a mist. A skunk can spray up to fifteen feet and as many as five times at one attacker. Please keep curious dogs on a leash so they do not encounter or surprise a skunk in or near Fish Creek.

-Summer 2020. www.massaudubon.org/learn/nature-wildlife/mammals/skunks

Vegetation

Balsam Poplars have medicinal uses and different parts of the tree have been used for different reasons. Which of the following parts was not used as medicine but as a tasty treat?

- a) bark
- b) sap
- c) leaves
- d) inner-bark



Plains tribes like the Blackfoot, Sarcee, and Stoney inhabited the Fish

Creek Valley for over one thousand years and found many uses for the land's vegetation. One of the most useful trees in the park is the Balsam Poplar. In the spring, these people would scrape off the tree's sap-drenched inner bark with a bone and enjoy its sweet taste. The leaves of the Balsam Poplar have also been used to relieve bruises, sores, and aching muscles, as well as treating horses with infected sores. The bark has been used to treat colds, tuberculosis, and whooping cough. The bark can also be boiled into a paste and used to make a cast for broken bones. Bud resin has also been used as a pain killer and cough medication. Many of the medicinal uses for trees and plants were passed on and documented by European settlers. Much of the modern medicine developed today is a synthetic form of medications used by the First Nations people.

-Mar 2008. <http://www.bowvalleyranche.com/bvrstory.html>

Edible & Medicinal Plants of the Rockies, Linda Kershaw

Leafy Spurge is a very persistent invasive plant that is not native to Alberta or the Park. For what purpose was Leafy Spurge originally brought to North America?

Spurge was accidentally brought over from native countries in Eurasia, and was mixed in with other seeds. Leafy Spurge has no practical purposes and is also quite toxic to humans and animals. Unlike other invasives that were imported for potential uses, spurge seeds were brought over by accident in the 1800s. The first documented case of leafy spurge was in the state of Massachusetts in 1827, after 80 years it spread to North Dakota, populating all the states in between. Currently, approximately 75% of the United States are infested with this weed, and in Canada, infested areas include all of the provinces, save for Newfoundland, Nunavut, and the North West Territories. You can do your part to fight this invader by helping us pull this nasty weed in the Park at Purge-the-Spurge on June 7th.

-May 2008. <http://www.nps.gov/plants/ALIEN/fact/eues1.htm>

<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/leafyspurge.shtml>

Photo: Purge-the-Spurge 2009.



History



Bow Valley Ranch, 1950s. Photo courtesy of the Freeman-Edgar Family

Norman Willans immigrated from England to Canada in 1886, and in 1910 he lived in the western part of what is now Fish Creek Provincial Park. Where did he work and what was his job? Hint: He worked in one of Alberta's most profitable industries with one of Calgary's most prominent businessmen.

Norman Willans came to Canada with his brother Bernard in 1886 and they studied at Guelph Agricultural College. In 1899 Willans married Alice Maud Deanne-Freeman and lived with her at the Anchordown Ranch near Millarville, Alberta. In 1901 Willans took over as manager and cattle buyer for Pat Burns' Bow Valley Ranch. Willans moved his family to the Fish Creek area in 1910. Norman would travel to work along Fish Creek by horseback from the west end of the Park at Shannon Ranch, now called Shannon Terrace, to the Bow Valley Ranch. The Ranch was used as a holding and sorting point for cattle before the stock was shipped to Calgary for packing and distributing. Willans constructed a log barn, to house cow ponies, and a cabin for his family using strait white spruce.

-June 2006

In 1908, Guy Weadick, an American vaudevillian, arrived in Calgary with a dream: to develop a “Wild West Cowboy Show” similar to those in the United States. In 1912, Weadick arranged financing from Calgary Businessmen; George Lane, A.J. McLean, Pat Burns, and A.E. Cross, whose combined influence during Calgary’s early days garnered them the title, the “Big 4”. Why did it take Guy Weadick four years to arrange financing for his “Wild West Cowboy Show,” and who was the middle man between him and the Big 4?

His name was H.C. McMullen, and without him the Calgary Stampede would not exist as we know it today. In 1908, after speaking with Guy Weadick, the vaudevillian, McMullen thought that a show honoring the Wild West culture was a good idea, but also thought that Calgary’s economy and public interest were not conducive to an event with this theme. Four years later, in 1912, as this city enjoyed an economic boom, the population’s interest in both rodeos and entertainment greatly increased. McMullen notified Weadick of the societal shift, and the quest for financial support began. The initial response to McMullen and Weadick’s campaign was unenthusiastic; however, McMullen got lucky when he met with cattleman George Lane. Intrigued by their proposal, Lane contacted McLean, Burns, and Cross, soon to be known as the “Big 4,” who financed the event. September 1912 saw the debut of the Calgary Stampede - soon to become the largest outdoor rodeo and livestock fair in the world.

-July 2007

What year was the RCMP officially established? Who were the North West Mounted Police and what role did they play in the development of this federal police force? Hint: The Fish Creek Valley and the Bow Valley Ranch are important heritage sites whose history is similar to that of Alberta: wild, untamed, and unpredictable. Alberta was truly the “wild west” until law and order were established.

The RCMP was originally entitled the North West Mounted Police, and was developed in 1873 in order to combat American whisky traders. Prior to merging with the Federal Government's Dominion Police force to form the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the North West Mounted Police was developed in the city of Manitoba. They were concerned about the activities of Fort Hamilton; more commonly known as Fort Whoop-Up. It was a trading post set up by two American whiskey traders from Montana, near Lethbridge, Alberta. In addition to shutting down Fort Whoop-Up, the North West Mounted Police worked to protect Ranchers and land owners in and around the developing settlement of Calgary. In addition to working with ranchers at the Bow Valley Ranch and other ranches, the NWMP worked to supervise the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

-Dec 2007 / Jan 2008. http://www.abheritage.ca/pasttopresent/rural_life/glossary.html#homesteader

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Whoop-Up

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Canadian_Mounted_Police

Who were Theodore Robitaille and James Llewellyn Wilson, and what were their connections to the Bow Valley Ranch and the Golden Age of Ranching?

Up until the 1880s the Bow Valley Ranch area of Fish Creek Provincial Park was known as the Fish Creek Supply Farm, developed to ration food and supplies to native peoples after the signing of Treaty 7.

Theodore Robitaille was a Lieutenant Governor from Quebec who leased part of the "Fish Creek Supply Farm" land to John and William Roper Hull, who developed a cattle ranching business that reached unrivaled success. In 1893, John transferred his interests in the ranch to his brother William, who became the sole owner. When the original log ranch house burned down, Hull hired James Llewellyn Wilson, Calgary's most prominent architect, to design his house.

Mr. Wilson also designed many Calgary landmarks including the Bank of Montreal and the Alberta Hotel buildings. When completed the natural brick two storey Bow Valley Ranch House cost between \$3,500 and \$4,000. William renamed the property the Bow Valley Ranch, and helped launch the era known as the Golden Age of Ranching. Hull enjoyed hosting lavish social gatherings at his elegant house to entertain some of this province's most influential citizens.

-June 2008

It is easy to see that summer is in high season and with beautiful weather we have been having, everyone is getting out to enjoy the sun. Do you know which urban park was named after a lumberjack from Quebec who came to this city in 1886 and died in 1925?

Prince's Island Park, one of Calgary's busiest summertime destinations, was named after Peter Anthony Prince from Quebec who set up the Eau Claire Lumber Mill. After his death, the lumber yard existed until 1944. His family donated the island to the city, who named it after Prince in 1947. In the early 1990s the Eau Claire market was opened. Eau Claire and Prince's Island both have historical significance and share promise for the future. The area is also very close to Chinatown, which has been a part of Calgary since 1910; at which time Calgary was still 10 miles north of the Bow Valley Ranch. The Glenbow Museum's ongoing exhibit Mavericks: An Incorrigible History of Alberta has information about Chinese immigrants who struggled and worked hard to make many significant contributions to this city's future, especially during the years of war and depression. Much like the city itself, Fish Creek Provincial Park continues to grow and evolve and to welcome all new visitors. Have yourself a great summer and go check out some other great parks around Alberta!

-Aug 2008. <http://content.calgary.ca/>

This Alberta provincial park was named in honour of one of this province's most influential citizens and has a strong connection to Fish Creek through this person. What park is it?

Peter Lougheed Provincial Park is located in the mountains of Kananaskis Country and was named in 1977 by the Alberta Government; at which time Peter Lougheed served as Premier. Peter Lougheed Provincial Park extends over 500 square kilometers and is one of Alberta's largest provincial parks. Mountains, lakes, valleys, and streams present breathtaking panoramic views and a majestic setting for recreational activities like fishing, mountain biking, hiking, camping, and cross-country skiing. Fortress Mountain is also located in this park, and has slopes designed for skiers and snowboarders with a variety of skills. Peter Lougheed was instrumental in establishing Fish Creek Provincial Park as a provincially protected area in 1975. This was accomplished in part through the Alberta Heritage Trust Fund Urban Parks Recreation Project, which raised money to help develop the Fish Creek valley into a usable recreation area for Calgarians and tourists alike.

-Oct 2008. http://www.tpr.alberta.ca/parks/kananaskis/parks_lougheed.asp
<http://www.braggcreek.ca/kananaskis/kananaskismap.htm>

According to Blackfoot legend, the iniskim was a sacred stone used by the Blackfoot tribe to:

- a) start a fire**
- b) wound enemies**
- c) attain spiritual enlightenment**
- d) call buffalo to buffalo jumps**

d) The Blackfoot people would use the iniskim to call buffalo to buffalo jumps. As the legend goes, before the Blackfoot hunted buffalo alone, and long before the Europeans arrived here in North America, the Blackfoot people lived and hunted alongside the wolves.

They had to hunt as wolves do, which they found difficult and often went hungry. One day, a Blackfoot named Weasel Woman was getting water from a river and saw a stone in the bushes. The stone was blazing red and spoke to her. The stone was the iniskim, and it informed Weasel Woman how it could be used to hunt buffalo by attracting them to buffalo jumps. The Blackfoot people then used the buffalo calling stone in a ceremony and after a successful hunt, had plenty of buffalo meat and skins. The iniskim helped the Blackfoot develop independently from the wolves, and still today many people hold onto these symbolic, spiritual stones and use them to help bring about success.

-Mar 2009. http://www.glenbow.org/blackfoot/EN/html/traditional_stories.htm

Who said "I like the climate better than any I have found between the Atlantic and the Pacific; the Rio Grande and the Peace, over all of which territory I have travelled. There is everything in the country a settler can desire." ? Hint: The person was the first European settler in the Fish Creek Valley.

John Glenn was known as the first European to settle in the Bow Valley Ranch area. He was born in 1834 in Ireland and at the age of 16 travelled to New York City via Liverpool, England. Then he headed south and after working on a ranch in Waco, Texas, was drafted into the Confederate army during the Civil War. Glenn was opposed to slavery and joined the Northern Federal Army and fought until the end of the war in 1865. In 1867 he began panning for gold in Barkerville, British Columbia, and after travelling through Kamloops, settled in the Fish Creek Valley. In 1873 Glenn married Adelaide Belcourt in St. Albert, after which they moved south and settled on a patch of land where Fish Creek meets the Bow River. At that time the Creek was called Sikome by the native people and these two waterways provided an almost endless supply of fish.

For more information about John Glenn and the early settlers in the Fish Creek Valley, check out the exhibits at the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre.

-May 2009. <http://www.members.shaw.ca/fetu/johnglenncabin/index.html>

Who was Theodore Robitaille and what was his relation to the Bow Valley Ranch area? Hint: He had dealings with the Federal Government in the late 1800s.

Theodore Robitaille was Quebec's Lieutenant Governor who owned the land that is now known as the Bow Valley Ranch for 4 years between 1883 and 1887. When John Glenn sold his farm in 1879 to the Federal Government, it was renamed "Supply Farm #24". After the failure of these "instructional farms" in the early 1880s, the government sold the farms. Robitaille purchased the land with plans to sell it off in smaller parcels at a good profit. However, by the time the land was his in 1883, the real estate market in western Canada had collapsed and he was unable to break it up and sell it off. Instead, he leased the land to William Roper Hull, and Hull's brother John, starting in 1887, and in 1892 he sold the land to Hull. It's a good thing that Robitaille was unable to divide and sell the land on which the Bow Valley Ranch now sits because if he had, Fish Creek Provincial Park would not exist today.

-July 2009. <http://tpr.alberta.ca/parks/fishcreek/bvr.asp>

Votier's Flats is located at the southernmost end of Elbow Dr. and provides users with a variety of trails, picnic areas, and views of the Park. How did this area get its unique name?

Votier's flats was named after James Votier; one of Calgary's first settlers. In the 1860s Votier travelled up from California and through Montana to pan for gold in the South Saskatchewan River.

During his trek through the Kicking Horse Pass, Votier met up with John Glenn (the earliest European settler in the Fish Creek area) and Sam Livingston. Eventually they decided to quit panning for gold, and pursued trading and farming as a way to make a living instead. In 1872, James Votier and his wife settled near Fish Creek. Here they produced a healthy garden, fished in the Creek, and traded goods with the First Nations people. Today, wildlife in Votier's Flats includes beavers, coyotes, and both whitetail and mule deer, as well as woodpeckers, pheasants, and owls. This area is also thick with poplar and evergreen trees, and its network of trails and picnic areas provides users with a variety of places from which to enjoy nature.

-Mar 2010. <http://tpr.alberta.ca/parks/fishcreek/wldspchek.asp>

<http://www.pioneersalberta.org/profiles/v.html>

For who was the Glennfield area of Fish Creek Provincial Park named after?

Glennfield was named after John Glenn, the first European settler in the Fish Creek area. He and his wife Adelaide Glenn arrived at the confluence of the Bow River and Fish Creek in 1873 and had set up their farm and trading post two years before the arrival of the North West Mounted Police. In 1879 Glenn sold the land to the Dominion government for use as a Supply Farm. He moved a few miles west, where Macleod Trail currently crosses Fish Creek, to the area now known as Glennfield. There he built a farm and examples of his farm produce were exhibited in major trade shows and western settlement exhibitions. By this time, the Glenns had established themselves in the Midnapore community. Glenn became the first purchaser of lots in the new town site of Calgary, was the vice-president of the Calgary and District Agricultural Society, and an organizer of the Alberta Settlers Rights Association. Glennfield is the most popular day use area in the Park and throughout the summer groups can reserve picnic and barbeque shelters there.

-May 2010. <http://tpr.alberta.ca/parks/fishcreek/glenns.asp>

What is pemmican, and why was it useful?

Before settlers came to the Fish Creek Valley, the Blackfoot people lived here and relied on pemmican as a food source. Pemmican was developed by curing and preserving buffalo meat. The meat was cut into strips, which were left to dry on a rack or over a fire, then pounded into a pulp and placed in a rawhide sack, made from the buffalo's hide, with boiling buffalo fat and berries, such as Saskatoons or cranberries. Pemmican gained popularity with European fur traders in the 1700s because it was perfect for long journeys. This was such an effective way to preserve meat that there have been reports of people eating pemmican after fifty years without any noticeable negative effects.

-Apr 2011. Hudson's Bay Company, Christopher Moore

Who set up a woolen mill in the late 1880s in the area just west of the present day Macleod Trail ?

It was William Shaw who established the woolen mill in the area of Fish Creek Provincial Park now known as Shaw's Meadow. Shaw was a true pioneer and his woolen mill is not only credited as being Alberta's first industry, but also part of the reason for Calgary's early growth. The mill produced blankets, flannel, material for clothing, and other woolen products. In the 1890s, his wife Helen, opened up a woolen store on 8th Ave. in Calgary, which successfully sold warm clothing to prospectors heading north in search of gold. Shaw also installed a telephone line using barbed wire fencing to transmit information between the mill and the store downtown. Shaw's Meadow is accessible via the Fish Creek LRT station and has a unique landscape featuring boreal forest, wetlands, and rolling hills.

-Aug 2011. <http://www.tpr.alberta.ca/parks/fishcreek/shaws.asp>

The creek that runs through Fish Creek Provincial Park was once part of the first irrigation system in western Canada. Do you know who established this system and in what year?

It was pioneer and maverick John Glenn who, in 1879, established western Canada's first irrigation system by using water from the creek. After Glenn sold his farm (located where the Bow Valley Ranch is today) to the Federal Government, he moved west to an area near present day Midnapore. He built an earth and rock dam about half a mile west of what is now Macleod Trail and diverted water from the creek to a ditch to irrigate his fields. A government report published in 1895 states that 130 acres could have been irrigated by this system. William Shaw settled next to Glenn's farm in 1883 and the system also provided water for his woolen mills. This took place 19 years before the Alberta Irrigation Company started their first project near Lethbridge.

-Apr 2012. <http://www.johnglenn.ca>

Which environmental stewardship group that is still operational today helped establish Fish Creek Provincial Park as a protected area in the late 1960s?

The Calgary Field Naturalists' Society was instrumental in the formation of Fish Creek Provincial Park in the 1960s. At the time, they were called the Calgary Bird Club but changed the name to the Calgary Field Naturalists' Society in 1969. The Society worked with community groups, the Local Council of Women and the National and Provincial Parks Association to establish 2000 acres of wilderness in the south part of the city as a protected area that would become part of Fish Creek Provincial Park. During 1970s and 1980s the Society worked to preserve other natural areas in the city such as Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Edworthy Park and Nose Hill.

In 2004 they adopted the trade name Nature Calgary but are still registered as “Calgary Field Naturalists’ Society” under the Societies Act of Alberta. In recent years the Society has partnered with other environmental groups like the Weaselhead /Glenmore Park Preservation Society, Ducks Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and others.

-Nov 2012. <http://ww2.glenbow.org> www.naturecalgary.com

Considering inflation, by today’s monetary standards, approximately how much was 50 ¢ worth in 1879?

In the late 1870s, John Glenn operated a trading post in the area where the Bow Valley Ranch is currently located and served meals for \$.50 each, which would be equivalent to approximately \$11.00 today. Originally from Ireland, Glenn made his way to the Fish Creek Valley via England, New York, other parts of the United States and British Columbia. In 1873 he married Adelaide Belcourt in St. Albert, AB and settled south of Calgary in the area now known as the Bow Valley Ranch. In addition to being the first European settler in the Fish Creek area, Glenn was also a savvy business man. He built a large residence, barn and other buildings and operated a trading post and rest area for traders travelling between the United States, Fort Calgary and Fort Macleod. In 1879 he sold the land to the Dominion Government, which he did not own outright, and moved west upstream of the creek towards present day Macleod Tr. Learn more about the history of Fish Creek at the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre.

-Feb / Mar 2013. en.wikipedia.org, Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre

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

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

-Oct / Nov 2013. Biographi.ca/en/bio/hull_william_charles_james_roper_15E.html

When did the first humans appear in the area where Fish Creek is located today?

The first human hunters appeared in this area approximately 8,000 years ago. It was 11,000 years ago when the glaciers melted and the first grasses and scrubland appeared. When species like mammoth, horse and camel appeared 8,000 years ago, they were hunted by this area's first human settlers. As the climate became warmer, forest and parkland developed in the area where Fish Creek is located today and humans settled here. 5,000 years ago, the human population began to expand and small groups of hunters stalked the bison through the prairie. The walls of the Fish Creek valley provided important kill sights for these people. Bison would be hunted in the spring and summer, and provide a food source throughout the cold winter months.

-Oct / Nov 2014

Which Provincially Protected area is located in the foothills approximately 50 km south west of Calgary and features grasslands, mature forests and small creeks?

The park in question is Brown-Lowery Provincial Park. Between 1869 and 1915 the area where this 278 ha (3 km²) park is located was used for logging. The Home Oil Company acquired the land in 1943 and looked for oil and gas deposits through seismic activity. Seismic and logging roads now run through the forested area and provide a unique trail network. Home Oil donated the land to the Provincial Government in 1969 and the area was designated as a Provincial Recreation Area in 1974. In 1992 it was named Brown-Lowery Provincial Park, in recognition of Home Oil's Founders James Lowery and Robert Brown. It is maintained by volunteers and Fish Creek Provincial Park frequently organizes tours of this unique area. For info on upcoming tours this Summer stay tuned to www.fish-creek.org.

-June / July 2015. FCPP Park Notes

Shaw's Meadow in Fish Creek was named after the Shaw Family. In which year did the Shaws arrive in the area?

Samuel William Shaw and his wife Helen arrived in the spring of 1883 and settled along Fish Creek near current day Macleod Trail. They came from Kent, England to make a new life in the unsettled Canadian west. Together they established Alberta's first industry, a woolen mill that could manufacture up to 300 lbs of wool per day. Helen Shaw opened Midnapore Woolen Mills in downtown Calgary in the area currently known as Stephen Ave and sold skirts, blankets and other woolen products. Many Yukon Gold Rush prospectors also purchased clothing from the store. The south east neighbourhood of Shawnessy was named after this important family and Millrise was named after the Shaw's woollen mill.

-Dec 2016 / Jan 2017. FCP Park Notes thedeepsouth.ca

Patrick Burns, rancher and meat packing giant was one of Calgary's Big 4, can you name the other 3 members of this historically significant group?

The other members of Calgary's Big 4 were AJ McLean, MLA and Manager of the CY Ranch; AE Cross, owner of the A7 Ranch and the Calgary Brewing & Malting Co; and George Lane, owner of the Bar U Ranch and horse breeder. It was in 1912 that Guy Weadick of New York state saw the potential to expand on Calgary's agriculture and ranching focused Exhibition by adding Wild West Style entertainment to the annual event. He borrowed funds from the Big 4 to set up the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede and bring in rodeo-style entertainers and trick riders from south of the border. The first Calgary Exhibition and Stampede took place Sep 2 - 5, 1912 and has been growing in scope and popularity every year since. It is also rumoured that the idea for the Calgary Stampede originated in Pat Burns' Bow Valley Ranch House long before Fish Creek became a park.

-Feb / March 2018. calgarystampede.com

In the 1990s a farmer in China found the fossilized remains of a dinosaur that shared many characteristics of modern day birds. What is the name of this dinosaur?

This dinosaur was named *Sinosauropteryx*, meaning "Chinese reptilian wing" or "China dragon bird." This dinosaur shared similarities with modern-day birds and its characteristics help to reinforce the evolutionary links between dinosaurs and birds. The China dragon bird lived during the cretaceous period between 145 - 66 million years BC. In addition to being covered in short feathers, this dinosaur was approximately 1.2 metres in length from head to tail. It also had a brown stripe along its elongated snout and mask around the eyes, which may have been used to reduce glare from the sun.

It is believed that the Sinosauropteryx would camouflage itself in open prairie, and because of its relatively small size, its best defense was to evade predators.

-April / May 2018. Wikipedia.org National Post



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.

-Oct / Nov 2018. talkaep.alberta.ca/CastleManagementPlan
calgaryherald.com/news/politics/ndp-government-unveils-new-recreationactivity-in-castle albertaparks.ca/parks/south/castle-wpp/
 Castle photo courtesy of Julie McDougall



Can you name the head Cook and Hospitality manager who worked for both William Roper Hull and Patrick Burns in the early 1900s ?

Charlie Yuen, born Yuen Chow, worked as head Cook and Hospitality manager for both Hull and Burns in the Ranch House at the Bow Valley Ranch long before Fish Creek became a park. He knew Annie Bannister, for whom Annie's Café and Bakery was named, and built the round Cookhouse table with Billy Bannister sometime between 1886 and 1910. There have been several reported sightings of his ghost roaming the ranch house, and some people even claimed to see him washing dishes in the Cookhouse. Charlie loved Fish Creek and it is said that his spirit does not want to leave. Learn more about Charlie and other local spirits at the upcoming Ghosts of Fish Creek walking tours.

-Oct / Nov 2019

About Fish Creek Provincial Park

In 1982, the Environmental Learning Centre at Shannon Terrace was developed into the primary outlet for Fish Creek Provincial Park's education programs. Shannon Terrace was named after the original settlers; the Shannon family, whose patriarch, Joseph Shannon, emigrated from Ontario in 1882. Although his family moved to California in 1911, he continued to rent out the property to other farming families. In 1952 the property was sold to a private buyer, who built a large wood and brick house there. This house would eventually become the Environmental Learning Centre. Who bought the property?

Frederick Charles Mannix bought the 180 hectares (1.8 km²) of land from the Shannon family and built the house in 1952. Mannix, a man of vision and exceptional business talents, contributed immensely to this country. During his lifetime he established one of Canada's largest construction companies; Mannix Construction, and is remembered as one of Canada's great modern builders, participating in the construction of many of this country's major infrastructures, including highways, pipelines, mines, dams, railways, and airports. In 1952, the same year he bought the Shannon land, he developed Menalta Coal Ltd., which soon became this country's largest coal producing company. His Pembina Pipe Line Ltd, originally a coal producing company, expanded into producing oil and gas and become the Pembina Corp., the largest owner of crude oil and liquids feeder pipelines in Canada. In 1977, Mannix sold his land to the provincial government, protecting it from further development and completing Fish Creek Provincial Park. The Environmental Learning Centre at Shannon Terrace is not only a municipal and provincial landmark, but a fundamental component to Fish Creek Provincial Park's successful operation.

-Sep 2007

In what year did the Rancho Historical Garden open? BONUS QUESTION: Where is the Rancho Historical Garden?

The Rancho Historical Gardens opened in June 2000 and is located between the Rancho Restaurant and Annie's at the Bow Valley Ranch. In the gardens, there are many native plants growing, including chokecherry, red-osier dogwood, fleabane, aster, goldenrod, prairie cone-flower, white spruce, and saskatoons. The Rancho Historical Society developed this unique area and worked with the Calgary Horticultural Society to plant these flowers and shrubs, many of which were donated by Golden Acres Garden Centre. The wooden gazebo acts as the focal point of the Native Gardens and there are five hand-hewn pine benches located throughout the gardens. On Mother's Day, May 12, 2002, Dr. Lois Hole, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, unveiled "Egg Money"; a colossal bronze statue that depicts a woman and her two children collecting eggs and feeding chickens. The statue was built by Studio West Bronze Foundry in Cochrane and is meant to honour the hard-working pioneer women who sold eggs because they had no money of their own. If you have not seen the garden, make sure to come down and visit it.

-Sep / Oct 2009. www.bowvalleyranche.com/garden.html

In what year did Annie's Bakery & Café open at the Bow Valley Ranch?

Annie's opened to the public as a café in 1997, but the building itself is well over one hundred years old. In the late 1880s Billy Bannister was hired by William Roper Hull as the first foreman and manager of the Bow Valley Ranch. During the time of Pat Burns, the building was known as the Foreman's house and Bannister and his wife Annie lived there from 1905 to 1910. Since that time many ranch foremen and their families lived in the home. Before the Foreman's house could be reborn as Annie's, it underwent substantial renovations.

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Walls and ceilings were repaired, broken windows and doors were replaced, exterior walls and the deck were repaired, the electrical was upgraded and handicap access was installed. Annie's Bakery & Café is open until September 2, so come down to Fish Creek and check out this unique historical building.

-July 2012. bowvalleyranche.com

Where in Fish Creek Provincial Park is Lafarge Meadows located and when was it established?

Lafarge Meadows spans close to 1.9 km along the Bow River between Hwy 22X and 194 Ave. SW and has an area of 0.59 km² (147 acres.) After four years of reclamation by Lafarge Canada, Lafarge Meadows was established in 2008. Prior to that, Lafarge Canada operated a gravel pit in the area south of Fish Creek from 1970 - 1998 and the land became an extension of the park in 2004. This expansive area features engineered wetlands, native trees and grasses, and provides habitat for wildlife like deer, coyote, muskrat, amphibians, and hundreds of birds, including blackbirds, cliff swallows and geese. In 2009, Lafarge Meadows was certified under the Wildlife Habitat Council's Wildlife at Work program, an award for organizations that demonstrate a commitment to long-term wildlife habitat enhancement efforts, and was recertified in 2011. Also in 2009, the Friends helped establish a 2km paved pathway to provide access to Fish Creek Provincial Park for the members of the communities of Chaparral, Chaparral Valley and Walden via Lafarge Meadows.

-June / July 2013

When was the Rancho at Fish Creek Restoration Society incorporated as a charity and in what year did they begin developing the Native Gardens at the Bow Valley Ranch?

The Ranche at Fish Creek Restoration Society was incorporated as a charity in 1995. In addition to restoring William Roper Hull's Ranche House and Annie's Bakery and Café, they developed the 2 acre area in between these buildings into the Native Gardens and the Artisan Gardens starting in 1999. Since then, approximately 100 volunteers have helped out with invasive plant removal, general maintenance and the planting of native species. This picturesque area of the Bow Valley Ranch also features a variety of artwork such as sculptures and paintings from local artists. This artwork was inspired by three central themes: First Nations history, family and the local natural environment. The Artisan Gardens help ensure Alberta's history, nature, and art will be honoured and represented in this culturally significant location. Take a stroll through the Artisan Gardens at the Bow Valley Ranch any time of the year to enjoy the beauty of this area and the vibrancy of the local art.

-Feb / March 2014. bowvalleyranche.com/artisan-corner.html

How did Sikome Aquatic Facility receive its name? BONUS: When was this facility first opened to the public?

Before the European settlers arrived, the Blackfoot people named the creek that runs along the Fish Creek Valley "Sikome," which means "black fish." Sikome Lake (now known as Sikome Aquatic Facility) and the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre opened to the public on Wednesday, August 16, 1978. People from all over the city can easily access Sikome by using Bow Bottom Trail and Sun Valley Blvd. Sikome covers an area of 0.4 km² (99 acres) and can attract close to 10,000 visitors per day during the summer. As the city has grown over the years, the park has changed to accommodate the increase in visitors. Recent improvements at Sikome include upgraded deck and shade structures.

-June / July 2014. A. Robertson, wikipedia.org, BVR Visitor Centre

Fish Creek Provincial Park can be divided into 4 distinct natural areas. One such area is grassland. Can you name the other 3?

This park spans over 16 km along the creek and over 9 km along the Bow River. Although the park has 2 major natural regions, grassland and parkland, it can be also be divided into 4 unique natural areas. The west end of the park between Shannon Terrace and Marshall Springs features glacially-carved valley walls and dense forest, which provides breathtaking natural views and an expansive trail network. In the Shaw's Meadow and Votier's Flats areas west of Macleod Trail, the valley wall inclines become more gradual and the forest becomes less dense. From Glennfield eastward the park landscape opens up into vast grasslands. The lush forested areas near Lafarge Meadows and Hull's Wood provide essential habitat for wildlife. Along the creek and the Bow River you can explore long expanses of environmentally diverse riparian areas. Autumn is one of the best times of year to get out and enjoy all that this amazing park has to offer.

-Oct / Nov 2015

When was the Grand Re-Opening of the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre at Shannon Terrace following the \$3.8 million upgrade and renovation?

The Grand Re-Opening of the ELC was celebrated on September 17, 2010, shortly after the project was completed in Autumn 2010. The extensive renovation project began in 2008 and has resulted in a state of the art educational facility. The ELC building now truly serves as a model of sustainable building technology. The building and surrounding area once belonged to construction mogul Fred Mannix, until the early 1980s when the government purchased the property, added it to Fish Creek Provincial Park, and created the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre.

In addition to thousands of students using the building through TD Learning Naturally and education programs, the Friends of Fish Creek host a variety of events there, including Fish Creek Speaker Series and trainings. You may have seen some of the beautiful artwork done by local artists on display there as part of the long-running Art in the Park program.

-June / July 2016

For how many years was the Great Blue Heron preservation site used by herons for nesting prior to the creation of Fish Creek Provincial Park in 1975?

It is estimated that the site, located just west of the Bow Valley Ranch, was used for over 40 years. Several dozen nests could be found in the highest branches of large balsam poplar trees. Between 1974 and 1986, as more people frequented the area and residential construction projects continued on both sides of the creek, the number of herons using the colony gradually declined. Although the last record of herons using the nesting site took place in 1988, these captivating birds can still be seen in the park, in areas such as along the Bow River between Bankside and Mallard and the engineered wetlands west of Votier's Flats. The best time of year to see herons in the park is between March and October.

-Oct / Nov 2016. FCPP Notes: Great Blue Herons in the Park

Fish Creek Speaker Series presentations currently take place at the Environmental Learning Centre at Shannon Terrace. Do you know where we held these talks in 2006?

The Fish Creek Speaker Series is one of the Friends' longest running programs and 12 years ago, these presentations took place in the theatre at the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre.

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As the popularity of these talks soon increased, the Friends realized we needed a larger venue. While the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre was being renovated in 2007 and 2008, we held the Speaker Series presentations at the Fish Creek Library and some of our readers surely remember these presentations. The Fish Creek ELC is a state of the art educational facility that has been an ideal place for not only Fish Creek Speaker Series talks since 2009, but also for other events like the Friends volunteer dinner, volunteer fair and meetings. The ELC is also used extensively for education programs and to display the works of local artists.

-June / July 2018. Photo: Fish Creek Speaker Series at the ELC.



What natural event took place in the early summer fifteen years ago and had a drastic impact on the park landscape?

The flood of June 2005 had a very significant effect on Fish Creek Provincial Park. While most people remember the floods of 2013, which deeply affected the city and the Bow River, the flooding of 2005 had more of an effect on the creek and the park. In 2005, the bridges that crossed the creek were damaged, and in some cases, were washed away. In the years following the flood, these bridges were replaced by state of the art flood resistant bridges of a European design. These new bridges successfully withstood potential damages by the floods of 2013. The flooding in 2005 helped to herald in a rebirth of the park in some ways, which included the construction of the paved pathway that extends through the southern end of park, and the construction of the engineered wetlands -Autumn 2020

Which area of Fish Creek Provincial Park has a parking lot but does not have a washroom facility?

Marshall Springs is located on the south side of the creek adjacent to Evergreen. It is one of the most unique and beautiful areas of Fish Creek Provincial Park because of its steep and dramatic valley walls, diverse vegetation and extensive pathway system. The area was named after ET Marshall, who lived on top of the escarpment from 1945-'70, while the Parkinson family lived at the bottom of the hill. In the 1970s the Parkinson House was demolished, but the chimney and fireplace remained intact and were incorporated into the park's washroom building, which was removed years later. In 2008, construction began on the engineered wetlands in the area, a joint project between the park and The City of Calgary. Various settling ponds at Marshall filter storm water before it enters the creek. Many wetlands were constructed in Fish Creek but Marshall Springs contains the largest of these.

-Feb / Mar 2019. Anna Robertson, Fish Creek Provincial Park

Photo: Beaver education walk, March 2021.



About the Friends of Fish Creek



When and where was the first Creekfest water celebration held?

Bonus: Can you name one of the presenters who was there?

The first Creekfest water celebration was held at Glennfield, just east of Macleod Tr. SE, on Saturday, June 4, 2011. Community members enjoyed performances by Peter Puffin's Whale Tales, Sean and Calvin, and Trout Ultd Canada as well as informative talks by Don Battiste from the Alberta Invasive Weed Council, Michelle Mueller and Janice Mah from the City of Calgary, Dr. Glynnis Hood from the U of C Faculty of Environmental Science, Carolyn Campbell of the Alberta Wilderness Association, and Naomi Parker, who gave a water testing demonstration. Through this initial effort, we made some essential partnerships and began developing what has become one of our most well-known and enjoyed annual events. Subsequent Creekfest water celebrations have been held at the Bow Valley Ranch in Fish Creek. We are getting ready for the 5th annual Creekfest on July 19, 2015, once again taking place at the Bow Valley Ranch and we look forward to seeing you there.

-Feb / Mar 2015

The Friends of Fish Creek were pleased to host A Taste of Autumn – Wine & Beer Tasting and Silent Auction Fundraiser on Sep 17 at Meadow Muse. Can you name the first fundraiser we held, and where it took place?

The first wine tasting and silent auction fundraiser was entitled Experience that Homegrown Feeling. This event took place at Willow Park Wines & Spirits on Friday, February 26, 2010 and over 180 people attended. The diverse mixture of auction items, donated by members, volunteers, and corporations, included gift certificates to restaurants, theatre tickets, artwork from local artists, hand-crafted jewelry and much more. This helped provide revenue to support Friends programs, showcased Canadian wines, and helped establish a model for future fundraising events A Taste of Spring and A Taste of Autumn.

-Dec 2015 / Jan 2016

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

The Friends of Fish Creek's base of operations in 1992 was the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre at Shannon Terrace. During the 1980s and 90s the park began to face the affects of increased use. In 1992, park staff members Wayne Meikle and Val Street began collaborating with a small group of citizens to raise awareness about preserving this park, and the Friends of Fish Creek was born. The Friends of Fish Creek became a registered charity in 1994, and supporters from the surrounding communities joined the Society as members and volunteers. In the late 1990s, the Friends moved into our current location in the Cookhouse at the Bow Valley Ranch. The Learning Centre was established in 1983 and in 2008 underwent an extensive renovation to turn it into a state of the art educational facility and event centre.

-June / July 2017

The Brick pathway was one of the Friends' 25th Anniversary projects organized in 2017. Can you name one of the other five Anniversary projects?

In 2017, the Friends celebrated our 25th year of bringing the community and the park together. Our office was renovated and now has a functional kitchen and entranceway, electrical, lights and window coverings (1), as well as new signage and an informative kiosk (2). Long time Friends supporter and local artist Jim Pescott painted an image of Fish Creek Provincial Park in his signature pointillism style and provided the Friends the rights to use the painting for awareness and fundraising (3). We worked with volunteers on a survey to better understand our role and to make improvements to meet the needs of the community (4). The rewilding streambank restoration program has become one of the Friends' most impactful volunteer activities (5). These projects helped the Friends to celebrate our first 25 years and set a good foundation for the next 25 years!

-Spring 2020

Brick pathway grand opening ceremony, October 2019



Get in Touch with the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society

Mail: PO Box 2780 Stn M, Calgary, AB T2P 2M7

In person: Bow Valley Ranch, Fish Creek Provincial Park,
15975 Bow Bottom Tr SE Calgary, AB,

Phone: 403-238-3841

Fax: 403-297-5284

Email: info@friendsoffishcreek.org

Website: www.friendsoffishcreek.org

twitter.com/fish_creek

facebook.com/friendsoffishcreek

instagram.com/fish.creek

Charitable Registration #891199747RR0001

