

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

www.friendsoffishcreek.org

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SHOW YOUR LOVE FOR FISH CREEK THIS OCTOBER!

The Friends of Fish Creek invite you to help us reach our fundraising goal of \$15,000 in support of Fish Creek Provincial Park by taking part in our 2nd Annual I ❤️ Fish Creek online fundraiser! The Friends do not receive regular funding and rely on support through grants, sponsorships, donations, program fees, memberships, and fundraising efforts in order to continue delivering programs and events that benefit the community. Your contribution during this fundraiser will be used towards protecting and preserving Fish Creek Provincial Park, a cherished natural area within our city, so that future generations can enjoy this park as much as we do today. **Help support this amazing natural area in four exciting ways:**

- Donate and receive a valuable tax receipt
- Share your favourite Fish Creek experience
- Purchase your 50/50 raffle ticket online for a chance to win up to \$5,000
- Bid on amazing silent auction items

For more information please visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/love

Photo courtesy of Julie Gourdeau



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2021 Executive

Membership Renewal

PROGRAM & STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR

BIDDING JULIA A FOND FAREWELL



For just over a year, we had the honour and pleasure of working with Julia Schneider, who joined our team in June 2020 as Program & Stewardship Coordinator. At the time, Julia had been involved with us for several years as a volunteer in

numerous programs, and just happened to have the qualifications we needed to fill in for Katie on short notice. Her background in Environmental Science and experience as a volunteer made her the perfect candidate to take on our Riparian Health Assessment program, ReWilding and Park Watch last year, as well as various Social Enterprise programs in 2021. She also

played a critical role in helping us to increase efficiencies and the quality of data collected through our new ArcGIS platform, for all of our stewardship programs, and piloting the use of Groasis WaterBoxxes as part of our poplar forest stewardship work.

Julia's last day with us was on August 20, after being offered the job of her dreams with another organization. Her new role as a Junior Hydrometric Technician, with the Water Survey of Canada (part of Environment and Climate Change Canada), will provide her with many opportunities for professional development in the environmental science field, and is a role that is quite rare and difficult to attain.

We are so grateful for everything that Julia brought to our organization, and are thrilled that she will continue to be involved as a volunteer in the Calgary Captured program (and hopefully much more!) We wish her nothing but the best, and will miss her dearly.

Photo, Alan Lam

WISHING VICTORIA ALL THE BEST

Since November, Victoria Dickinson has been our Community Engagement & Communications Coordinator. She has helped with a variety of programs including Fish Creek Speaker Series, memberships, the newsletter and posters, Creekfest, the Fish Creek Ambassador program, Beaver Coexistence, Pop Up Outreach and interpretive signage. Although support for her position was tenuous from the start due to funding limitations, the Friends were optimistic that we could secure more funding to fund her role through grants focused on community engagement activities. Unfortunately, our applications for funding were largely declined. It is of course very disappointing that we will be losing Victoria due to a lack of financial support for the role of Community Engagement & Communications Coordinator. We enjoyed working with Victoria this year and wish her success and happiness in all her future activities.



QUIZ QUESTION

Which unwelcomed and invasive non-native fish species has recently been discovered in Fish Creek Provincial Park and other Alberta wetlands?

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

CCC INTERNSHIP PROJECT

THE CANADIAN CONSERVATION CORPS EXPERIENCE

DYLAN BARNES, CCC INTERN

The summer months are a busy time for many people. Punctuated with trips, vacations and events, summer represents the culmination of a lot of planning for a lot of people. When I started with the Canadian Conservation Corps (CCC), I was expecting a summer filled with exposure to ideas and methods for conserving the natural world, to provide an appreciation for nature and an instinct for its preservation. While I found

such a passion through the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society, what I have also discovered is the critical need for a committed community; the coordination of partners and volunteers enables the Friends to host a variety of community involvement and engagement programs and events. Relationship building is crucial to organizational success.

The Canadian Conservation Corps is a program set in motion by the Canadian Wildlife Federation for adults ages 18-30. Successful applicants learn skills in the outdoors by taking on an internship in parks around the country and creating their own projects. The goal of all of this is to generate a nationwide network of individuals dedicated to the preservation of Canada's natural beauty and ecology.

I was driven to apply for the CCC program for a few reasons, a lot of which stemmed from dissatisfaction with my employment, and a desire to do more in my community. I applied, was interviewed, and was eventually placed with the Alberta team. As COVID



Dylan Barnes and Cassie Fuller - Canadian Conservation Corps Interns. Bottom: Leafy spurge biocontrol, with Alberta Invasive Species Council field staff.

restrictions were still in place at the time, the program that was supposed to send an applicant across the country instead sent me across my own city.

Since June, the Friends of Fish Creek would be my home for the next three months, and without delay, Cassie (the other CCC intern) and myself, launched right into our roles. The first week consisted of a deluge of information, keys, passwords, times, dates, messages, and meeting

people. We went to every stewardship outing, were loading wagons and pulling weeds while trying to remember all of the plants we saw and the names of the volunteers we met. Through that first week what was impressed upon me was the amount of time necessary to make an event or fieldwork happen. It seemed to me that for any time out in the field at least the same amount of time was required in the office - gathering tools and supplies, working out sponsorships and grants, taking meetings for scheduling and discussing events with other staff. All of this preliminary work was needed to move the machine forwards.

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CCC INTERNSHIP PROJECT - CONT'D

What I found out as well, was how instrumental volunteers are to all of the projects that are completed. Volunteers plant the trees, volunteers pick the weeds, volunteers conduct riparian health assessments, and volunteers take care of the Visitor Centre. If there was anything impressed upon me early on, it was how much the success of a program relied on the commitment of people from the community willing to put in the work.

Coordinators and volunteers mutually aid each other toward the common goal of preserving the park

habitat for future generations. I believe these types of relationships are a key part of what makes the internships in the CCC so effective, in teaching young conservationists about how the environment is actually conserved. With lessons like these being passed along to the next generation of environmentally concerned Canadians, there is no doubt in my mind that more of the problems facing our natural world will benefit from dedicated individuals willing to rise to the challenge.

BREAKING GROUND ON THE FISH CREEK COMMUNITY TERRACE

The Friends are pleased to announce that the installation of Phase 1 of the Fish Creek Community Terrace is now complete.

Please drop by the Cookhouse at the Bow Valley Ranch to take a look at the newly engraved

bricks. We would like to thank all of the donors who dedicated a brick along the Terrace as this fundraiser provides important support for the Friends programs, courses, events and activities here in Fish Creek Provincial Park.

The brick program provides really meaningful opportunities to support the Friends and the park, but to also leave a lasting legacy in this cherished public space. Phase 1 of this new section was comprised of 64 bricks, which is a substantial number, and many of the donors contributed 2 bricks.

The construction of Phase 1 took several days to complete, following multiple planning meetings with volunteers and Park Management. On August 26, we rented tools and picked up all of the materials needed.



Then on August 27, we cut back the asphalt pathway and lined it with wood to define the border in front of the Cookhouse. On September 1, of the following week, all hands were on deck for the excavation of the current surface, and the placement of road gravel as a base for the

terrace (*pictured here*). Then on September 2, the new bricks were placed along the terrace and finishing work was completed. Special thanks to volunteers David Arnott, Bruce Mitchell, Don Barrington, Dylan Barnes, Ward Sanderson, Angel Spasoff and Fish Creek Acting Maintenance Lead Jeremy Bakken for their expertise and assistance with this project.

We are now offering bricks for Phase 2 of the Fish Creek Community Terrace to be installed in 2022. There are fewer than 150 spaces available so get yours today. If you have a local business, consider dedicating a brick – it is a great way to advertise in a bustling location, and you will receive a tax receipt. Share your story by dedicating a brick today. For more information, please visit <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/brick>

CREEKFEST - REIMAGINED

FINDING NEW WAYS TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

The 2nd Annual Creekfest - Reimagined took place on August 28 in Fish Creek, and from July 17 - 23 online. Creekfest is the Friends' annual summer time festival that focuses on healthy watersheds, environmental conservation, and protecting and appreciating the beautiful Provincial Parks in Alberta.

The Friends planned to host a Pop Up Creekfest event on July 17, which would kick off Creekfest - Reimagined week. Unfortunately, the Pop Up component in the park was rescheduled due to poor air quality caused by nearby wildfires.

The online series began on July 17 with a live concert through Facebook by Peter Puffin's Whale Tales. Peter is a world renowned Juno award-winning children's performer and educator, as well as a steadfast supporter of Fish Creek and our conservation projects. Later that week, our friends at the Bow Habitat Station hosted an online presentation about wildlife in Fish Creek and the Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society scheduled a presentation about wetlands. Wellness programs during the week of Creekfest included the Mindful Pause Guided Meditation and the Nature and Forest Therapy walk. Due to the smoky conditions, the BungyPump outing for that week was unfortunately cancelled.

Several groups provided links to fascinating videos and we would like to thank Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Evergreen Theatre, and the Rocky Mountain Eagle Research Foundation. To check out these videos please visit <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/event/creekfest>

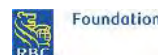


Beaver Coexistence info table at Creekfest - Reimagined on Saturday, August 28 at the Bow Valley Ranch.

Through these online presentations and wellness programs there were over 160 engagements. The Pop-Up component of Creekfest at the Bow Valley Ranch provided our community partners with a chance to meet with park visitors and provide information about our programs and conservation. We engaged with over 450 community members at the Creekfest Pop Up event.

We appreciate the involvement of participating individuals and organizations for taking part in Creekfest - Reimagined: artist Bettina Sieger, Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society, Kaykima Wilderness, the Calgary Public Library, The Path Less Taken and the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation. Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped out at Creekfest - Reimagined.

Did you enjoy Creekfest - Reimagined this year? Like Creekfest at facebook.com/creekfestinfishcreek



2021 CAPTURE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WINNERS

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Friends' annual Capture Nature Photo Contest, which wrapped up at the end of July. Nineteen people registered this year, with many participants returning from previous years, and a total of 71 stunning photos were submitted. As always, we hope that this contest entices people to visit Fish Creek more often, and view it through the lens of new photo themes each year. We know that this year's themes of Community, Forest for the Trees, Leading Lines, and Framing were quite challenging, but it's wonderful to see how differently the park can be interpreted, and enjoyed through photography.



This year's winners are:

Public Vote:

Adult – Taylor Potter, Votier's Flats Mergansers (Leading Lines, top right)

Youth – Ryan Eisenbart, Shaw's Meadows Cliff Swallows (Community category, bottom left)

Juror Vote:

Youth – Solene McCracken, Hull's Wood Flower (Leading Lines, top)

Adult – Emma Norris, Parkland Mink (Framing, right)



We encourage you to check out our online photo gallery, where all contest photos will remain until we kick off Capture Nature 2022! See all of this year's photo submissions at <https://capturenature1.shootproof.com/gallery/11604120>

Special thanks to contest sponsors Vistek, RMB Photography, the Bow Valley Ranch Restaurant, the Apothecary in Inglewood and Atmosphere. And as always, many thanks to the volunteers who effortlessly coordinated the program behind the scenes and who provided their informed perspectives for the Juror vote.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

MANAGING INVASIVE SPECIES IN FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

EMMA STROUD, CITIZEN SCIENCE & STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR

Weed Watchers Volunteer Program

The ideal way to manage invasive vegetation is through an “EDRR” approach: Early Detection, Rapid Response. The Friends have been attacking small infestations of weeds for several years, targeting “winnable battles” that volunteers can eradicate by hand-pulling. The larger and denser a weed patch becomes, the more difficult it is to eradicate through hand-pulling alone.

Beginning as a small group of volunteers picking weeds during their walks in the park, Weed Watchers has expanded into a formalized volunteer program. In partnership with the [Alberta Invasive Species Council \(AISC\)](#), volunteers are trained how to ID more than 40 prohibited, noxious and unregulated weeds.

Volunteers then head out to the field and map, remove and dispose of weeds. More eyes on the ground allows patches of invasive species to be dealt with quickly, before they have the chance to establish and outcompete native species. Weed Watcher teams can also lead small groups on single species weed pulls, expanding our capacity to all corners of the park.

Biological Control

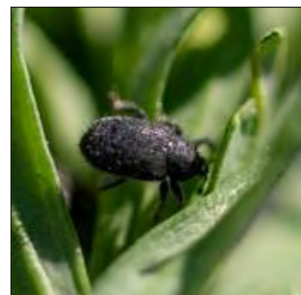
Using insects highly specialized in consuming invasive weeds, biological control has been researched for decades, with over 20 release sites in Fish Creek Provincial Park over the years. Have you seen any leafy



Weed Watcher volunteer in the field identifying noxious weeds. (Photos, Alan Lam)

spurge hawk-moth larvae (*Hyles Euphorbiae*) in the park? These pinky finger-sized biocontrol insects were released decades ago, as a strategy to control leafy spurge (through leaf consumption), but have largely been replaced in recent years by spurge beetles (*Apththona sp.*), which are more efficient consumers of the plant. In July, our staff and a handful of volunteers were trained by City of

Calgary and Alberta Invasive Species Council staff on spurge beetle release and monitoring, as we worked together on new releases on Sun Valley Drive and Parkland slopes.



Yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*) is another noxious weed that is prevalent in Fish Creek. The shoot-galling weevil *Rhinusa pilosa* (pictured here) is highly specific to toadflax, and creates a tumor-like growth on the stems of

growing plants. Female *R. pilosa* lay eggs within developing toadflax shoots, initiating the formation of a 2-5 cm long gall, which steals vital nutrients from the weed for their own development. The national weed biological control program through [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge Research & Development Centre](#), provided the Friends with two releases of the stem-galling weevil this summer, which were released in two locations spaced 950+ metres apart in the ATCO Heritage Grassland and along Sun Valley Drive.

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VEG MANAGEMENT CONT'D

ATCO Heritage Grassland Project Site

The Friends accompanied [Cows and Fish](#) staff Kathryn Hull and Kristina Boehler this spring to learn how to complete a rangeland health assessment in the ATCO Heritage Grassland. Two of the greatest challenges facing this project are encroachment from smooth



Weed whopper ready to tackle invasive thistle and agricultural grasses from the ATCO Heritage Grassland.

have established well in the grassland plot, offering competition to invasive weeds.

brome (*Bromus inermis*) and Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*). With the purchase of three weed-whippers, the Friends have been tackling these invasive species weekly in an effort to limit their spread. Luckily, the rangeland health assessment revealed that native grasses

Sun Valley Drive Pilot Project Site

Weekly mowing along Sun Valley Drive kept invasive species from re-seeding this season.

Creek (along Sun Valley Drive), from the middle of May to the middle of September. This group of volunteers has prevented the return and reproduction of leafy spurge and Canada thistle, and they happily report

The Sun Valley Drive volunteer mowing crew has been doing excellent work all summer, mowing a 1.03 ha piece of grassland along the south ridge of Fish

observing coyotes, raptors and ravens hunting in the trimmed grass. As mentioned above, yellow toadflax weevils and leafy spurge beetles were also released in the site, with spot herbicide application scheduled for the fall, by our partners at [Intricate Vegetation](#).

Rangeland Health Assessment

Cows and Fish and the Friends performing a quadrat sample during a Rangeland Health Assessment on Sun Valley Drive SE. (Photo, Alan Lam)

In addition to the rangeland health assessment completed at the ATCO Heritage Grassland, a second study was also completed along Sun Valley Drive. Both of these grassland ecosystem patches are “modified,” meaning they were used in the past to produce hay and cattle. As such, the predominant plant cover consists of invasive agricultural grasses and noxious weeds.

Lafarge Meadows Pilot Project Site

When patches of invasive species are too large and dense to be controlled by manual hand-pulling, multiple strategies must be used in order to remove them. There is a large, dense patch of the prohibited noxious spotted knapweed in Lafarge Meadows, which has become one of our pilot project sites for various management strategies. Such methods include weed-whipping, spot and wick herbicide application, and manual removal of flower and seed heads.

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VEG MANAGEMENT CONT'D

Migratory Bird Nest Search with Stantec

Migratory birds are highly sensitive to disturbance, and to avoid causing harm to them - and to ensure we are in regulatory compliance with the [Migratory Birds Convention Act](#) and [Alberta Wildlife Act](#) legislation - a migratory bird nest search should be conducted prior to the execution of any high-disturbance activities, such as mowing, weed whipping or chemical control. The gracious support from our project partner, [Stantec](#), ensured the necessary searches were completed by qualified staff, enabling us to execute our chosen strategies with the safety and protection of local wildlife top of mind.



Stantec wildlife biologist performing a nest search in Lafarge Meadows. (Photos, Alan Lam)



Another best practice in invasive species management is surveying the site for native plants. Rare plants, such as *Lithospermum occidentale*, observed by project partner, [Tannas Conservation Services](#) biologists in Lafarge Meadows, must be avoided when using herbicides or mechanical methods to target weeds.

Following migratory bird nest searches, buffer zones, ranging from 30 - 300 m were flagged and mapped, to ensure chemical application and

disturbance was avoided in these sensitive areas. Native plants were staked with orange pin flags, to ensure they would be avoided, and areas with high biodiversity were designated as Weed Watcher survey grids, for hand-pulling only. Spotted knapweed in sensitive areas such as a patch of trembling aspen trees (*Populus tremuloides*) was treated using wick application only,

applying herbicide directly to individual knapweed foliage with a sponge so as to prevent unwanted absorption by the surrounding poplars.



Map of Lafarge Meadows spotted knapweed project site, with migratory bird nests and associated buffer zones. Intricate Vegetation Inc. spot spraying prohibited noxious spotted knapweed in Lafarge Meadows. (Photos, Jeff Nichiporik). Rare native plant *Lithospermum occidentale* in Lafarge Meadows. (Photo, Daina Anderson, Tannas Conservation Services)

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VEG MANAGEMENT CONT'D

Thesium Mapping Pilot Project

The invasive species *Thesium ramosum*, has made Fish Creek infamous since its arrival in the early 2000s, making it one of only a few locations in North America where it has been reported. Since then, the hemi-parasitic weed has spread across Fish Creek Provincial Park, perplexing researchers on its mechanism of spread. Several hypotheses have emerged in the past years, including preferential consumption/seed spreading by ants, and the possibility of the weed being transported by water.

In 2021, [St. Mary's University](#) Professor, Dr. Mary Ann McLean, four of her research students and botanist Dr. Ian MacDonald partnered with the Friends to research one of these hypotheses, by mapping Thesium distribution within and outside the Fish Creek floodplain. St. Mary's students have completed floodplain mapping on the length of Fish Creek and Friends' volunteers continue to chip away at non-floodplain areas. Stay tuned for the results of this partnership!



Calgary botanist and researcher Dr. Ian MacDonald and Friends' volunteer Alannah discussing *Thesium ramosum* survey methods.
(Photos, Alan Lam)

We would like to thank all those who have helped us to elevate the level of work we are able to do as a small but mighty watershed stewardship group - getting mightier by the minute because of what we learn

from our partners - and the gaps in capacity and expertise that they are able to fill.



St. Mary's University Professor Dr. Mary Ann McLean instructing Friends' volunteers how to identify *Thesium ramosum*.

Thanks to the folks at Alberta Environment and Parks, the Alberta Invasive Species Council, The City of Calgary, Intricate Vegetation, St. Mary's University, Stantec, and Tannas Conservation Services, for the critical parts they have each played in helping to plan and execute this year's vegetation management work. Financial support from ATCO, Alberta Environment and Parks, the Bow River Basin Council, and the RBC Tech for Nature Grant collectively covered costs associated with staff time and professional services, supplies and equipment, and volunteer appreciation.

Finally – and absolutely by no means least - thanks to so many Friends' volunteers who have taken on the digital mapping, mowing and other vegetation management strategies that have made this work possible.

Thank you to all of our Vegetation Management Supporters



Foundation



FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK ONLINE STORE

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

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

New Items for 2021 -

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



More items in stock

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

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

MEMBERSHIP SHOWS YOU CARE

Now is the best time of year to renew your Friends of Fish Creek membership or to become a member. We are now providing memberships for 2022, which will be good until December 31 of next year. The Friends of Fish Creek enjoy our role as the link between the community, partnering organizations, local business, and Park Management. In 2021, thanks to ongoing support from members like you we were able to adapt and modify existing programs, and launch new and exciting programs like the Beaver Coexistence Project, the Fish Creek Ambassador Program and the Lending Library for volunteers.

The Friends of Fish Creek do not receive regular funding to run our more than 30 programs that benefit the park and community, and we are reliant on a variety of sources such as grants, program fees, personal donations and membership revenue. Membership fees are: \$35 - individual, \$45 - family, \$25 - senior individual, \$30 - senior family. Your membership contribution will go a long way in helping us to create a community of informed park users and in turn benefit the park landscape. Friends members receive benefits like admission to our Fish Creek Speaker Series programs, a discount on the popular Birding Courses, a discount at select local businesses, and the ability to vote at our Annual General Meeting.

Show your support for Fish Creek Provincial Park by becoming a member or renewing your membership today. To renew your commitment to Fish Creek Provincial Park please mail in the membership form on the last page of this newsletter or visit <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/membership>

QUIZ ANSWER - SPRING ISSUE

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

Answer: Fish Creek Provincial Park stretches over 16 km from 37 St. in the west to the Bow River in the east, and over 9 km north/south along the Bow River. Fish Creek features diverse ecological areas including parkland, grassland and riparian areas. There are over 66 km of paved pathways, 33 km of granular pathways and close to 18 km of singletrack trails in the park. Enjoy exploring this amazing park any time of year, and please remember to be courteous to all other park users that you may meet.

STAFF

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2021 EXECUTIVE

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

Membership Form -

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

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

Name: _____ Phone: _____

email: _____ Address: _____

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

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

Membership: Individual ☐ \$35.00 Family ☐ \$45.00

Senior (+60 years of age) Individual ☐ \$25.00 Family ☐ \$30.00

Donation: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other: \$ _____

Please Fill out: Membership \$ _____ Donation \$ _____ Total \$ _____

To pay online: www.friendsoffishcreek.org/membership or donate on CanadaHelps.org

(Charitable Registration #891199747 RR0001)

Signature of donor or member: _____

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