

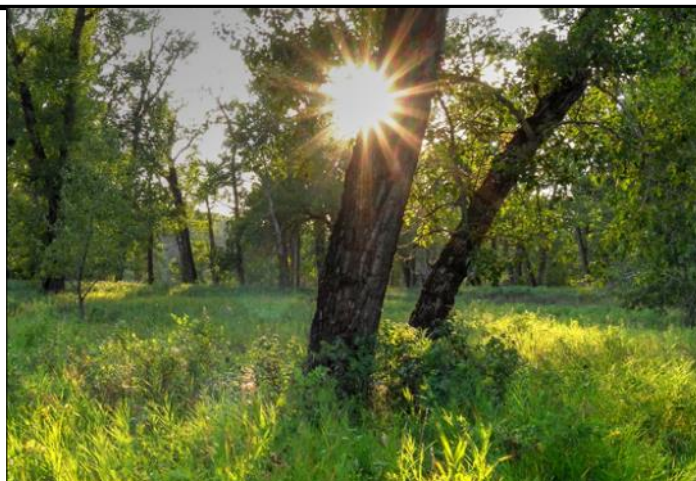
Our mission is: To engage the community through activities and awareness
to conserve a truly unique naturalized urban park.

www.friendsoffishcreek.org

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Summer 2022

HELP THE FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK CELEBRATE OUR 30th ANNIVERSARY THROUGH OUR DEDICATION TREE PROJECT!



The Friends' origins stretch back to 1992 when a group of concerned citizens began working with Park Management to address some of the concerns in the park brought on by the growing city of Calgary. For thirty years the Friends have been dedicated to protecting this natural area, and since 2014 our restoration program has helped to address the aging poplars in the park. Fish Creek's poplar forest is generally a same-aged cohort of trees that is nearing end of life and is not adequately regenerating in some areas of the park. As a keystone species these trees play a critical role in maintaining the overall health of the watershed, and a healthy cohort of mixed-age balsam poplars supports bird and fish populations in the park. This September, 35 native balsam poplars will be planted along the Stream Changes accessible trail near the Bow Valley Ranch, establishing the Friends' 30th Anniversary Poplar Grove.

We invite to help us celebrate this milestone and support the long term sustainability of the park by dedicating a tree within the grove. Each 30th Anniversary donation will include an invitation to take part in the tree planting day on September 17, the opportunity to purchase a limited edition art print of the 30th Anniversary Poplar Grove by local artist Cori Imbery, and a tax receipt for \$475.

We invite you to leave a lasting legacy and support healthy poplars for the next thirty to one hundred years. For more information visit www.friendsoffishcreek.org/programs/thirty Photo, Stan Kwasniowski

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FISH CREEK SPEAKER SERIES

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE
2022/2023 PRESENTATION SEASON

KATIE BAKKEN, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR

As you may know, over the last couple of years, we've been hosting our monthly Fish Creek Speaker Series presentations online, using Zoom. We have discovered many pros to online programming, such as being able to *bring in* speakers from further afield and being able to deliver presentations regardless of the weather.

On the other hand, the move to online programming meant that some of our members have not been able to easily access these presentations, and of course we all missed the face-to-face interaction – and cookies! – that we enjoyed at the pre-pandemic Fish Creek Speaker Series events at the Learning Centre.

One of the unexpected pros of the online format came this spring, when we were presented with an opportunity to partner with the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association and KLM Captioning to provide live, on-screen captioning for our Speaker Series events. It is our hope that this added accessibility feature removed barriers for community members who benefit from text captioning.

As we wrap up the current Fish Creek Speaker Series season and look ahead to 2022-23, we are considering whether to return to in-person presentations or continue hosting these events online (or offer both options) and whether or not to continue the partnership with CHHA and KLM to provide captioning for greater inclusion of those with hearing difficulties.

We are eager to hear from you! We would like to request a few minutes of your time to complete a short online survey to help us gather your feedback around the Fish Creek Speaker Series. [Please click here to complete a short survey.](#) We look forward to seeing you in the park or online again soon!

SKIPTHEDEPOT - TURN *RETURNABLES* INTO CASH

Do you have bottles and cans, old clothes or even unused electronics in your home or garage? SkipTheDepot is an Alberta-based organization that will pick up your bottles and cans and enable you to donate the proceeds to the Friends of Fish Creek. Now there is no need to go to the depot or wait for a neighbourhood bottle-drive to redeem your empty beverage containers. The Friends are pleased to partner with SkipTheDepot to provide a new opportunity to support Fish Creek, or simply add a little cash to your own pocket. You can even start your spring cleaning early by letting SkipTheDepot know about old clothing and electronics. For more information or to schedule a pick-up please visit <https://app.skipthedepot.com/ffcpps>

QUIZ QUESTION

In what year did the Friends launch the Beaver Coexistence project and in what area of the park did this program focus?

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

FAREWELL TO SHANA BARBOUR



In July, the Friends learned that Shana Barbour will be moving on from her position with the Friends. Shana joined the Friends of Fish Creek team in 2014 and over the years her extraordinary list of achievements has helped to strengthen the Friends as an organization and enhance our reach in the community. She began as a Program Assistant, helping to run programs like Park Watch, Invasive Species, and event planning. Soon her expertise grew to encompass volunteer management, grant writing, financial systems, staffing, issuing tax receipts, and human resources. In recent years she took on the role of Stewardship & Social Enterprise Manager, and has made a lot of friends and professional acquaintances during her time with the Friends.

There were very few projects that Shana was not involved in, either directly or indirectly. She spearheaded new initiatives like the Capture Nature Photo contest, established the essential rewilding and restoration programs, took the Wellness program in new and exciting directions, took part in the Project Impact volunteer survey, oversaw the Calgary Captured program, developed the Community Action Team of volunteer fundraisers, adopted new accounting processes and procedures to improve organizational efficiencies, organized the 25th Anniversary project—which included a Cookhouse renovation, helped organize A Taste of Autumn and the more recent I Love Fish Creek and 30th Anniversary Poplar Grove fundraisers, just to name a few of the programs she developed or improved. The Friends and the Fish Creek Community are truly grateful for all of Shana's hard work and commitment over the years and wish her all the best in the future. Pictured here with Katie Bakken, Community Engagement Facilitator.



WELCOME TO THE TEAM KUMIKO

In June, Kumiko Kamiike came on board in the new role of Visitor Services Coordinator and the Friends are very pleased to welcome her back to the team. Kumiko originally volunteered with the Friends several years ago, participated in virtually all of our programs, and then was hired as a Program Assistant a few years later. Kumiko has a wealth of knowledge and expertise around most of our programs and many volunteers enjoyed working with her in recent years, and will certainly enjoy working with her again. She will be in the Cookhouse most days of the week and will coordinate programs like Fish Creek Ambassador, Park Watch, Pop-Up Outreach, Calgary Captured and provide assistance to visitors to the office. The Friends are very fortunate that Kumiko was able to join the team on short notice, and that she can jump into leading some of our flagship community-focused programs.



WELCOME CCC INTERNS

With the arrival of summer, the Friends are pleased to welcome three interns from the Canadian Conservation Corps program—Justin Li, Amber McMunn and Marnel Muller.



locations throughout Ontario after moving there with her parents as an elementary school student. She received a Bachelor of Environmental Studies from the University of Waterloo, and her fieldwork included studying

Justin brings with him a passion for the protection of the natural world and a desire to share that passion with others. He recently obtained his undergraduate's degree in Accountancy from the John Molson School of Business in Montreal and has been employed part-time in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) since 2017. Since starting his internship with the Friends he has been busy with conservation and stewardship activities, and has been involved in programs like the native plant garden, poplar rescuing, riparian monitoring and mapping, Creekfest, social media, fundraising and weed watchers.

cheetahs in Namibia and conducting inventories of trees in Ontario. This is Marnel's first time in Alberta and she has been enjoying exploring and learning about this province and Fish Creek Provincial Park.

Amber McMunn is originally from Bancroft ON and currently resides in Port Coquitlam BC while working as a Research Analyst with the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. She has spent time living in Nairobi, Kenya and enjoyed backpacking in East Africa. Amber is passionate about helping people connect with nature, conserving the natural world and supporting sustainable living solutions.

Marnel and Amber have been helping out with the Fish Creek Ambassador program, Creekfest, the native plant garden program, Riparian Health Assessments, and Mapping, Monitoring and Maintenance.

If you see Justin, Amber or Marnel in the Cookhouse or out in the park please stop and say hi.



Justin (pictured here) started in early June and in July we were pleased to welcome two more CCC interns - Amber and Marnel (pictured above).

Marnel is originally from South Africa, and has lived in various

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - CASINO FUNDRAISER

The Friends of Fish Creek Casino Fundraiser is scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, September 6 and 7 at the Deerfoot Inn & Casino. The Casino takes place every eighteen months and helps provide essential support for us to operate our conservation and stewardship initiatives here in Fish Creek Provincial Park. No experience is necessary and all training will be provided.

We are in need of volunteers to help in the following positions: General Manager, Alternate GM, Banker, Count Room Supervisor, Count Room Staff, Cashier and Chip Runner

To help out at the Casino fundraiser, please sign Up through MyImpactPage or contact Chris at the Friends of Fish Creek, chris@friendsoffishcreek.org or 403-238-3841 ext. 1.

FRIENDS' YOUTH VOLUNTEER RECOGNIZED WITH CALGARY-WIDE AWARD

KATIE BAKKEN, FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR

Think camps, sports and music lessons are the only way to engage young people in the community? Think again! The Friends of Fish Creek – and many other organizations in Calgary – offer a wide variety of youth-friendly volunteer opportunities that get young people outside, active and learning in a social environment.

Friends' programs like Park Watch, Calgary Captured, Beaver Coexistence, Weed Watchers and ATCO Heritage Grassland and our events such as Creekfest/Get to Know Nature offer great opportunities for youth engagement.

And it goes beyond just getting young people outside, active and learning! Have you heard the old adage "You need experience to get a job, but you need a job to get experience"? Volunteering is a great way for youth to learn new skills, gain experience and build their resume. Volunteers like Himanshu Sangale understand this first-hand. Himanshu began volunteering with the Friends at age 15, with the active support of his mother, Smita.



Volunteers Smita and son Himanshu Sangale all ready to head out into the field.

Now, almost two years later, he has gained so much experience and knowledge through volunteering, that his resume includes skills such as plant identification, water sampling, customer service, manual labour, data entry, video editing and more.

Last winter, Himanshu jumped at an opportunity to take a course through one of our partners to learn how to create a digital story. He wove his diverse Fish Creek volunteer experiences into a very thoughtful digital story *What Can the Beaver Teach Us?* Check it out at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FccbCcf1gCk>

This spring, Himanshu was recognized for his efforts by receiving a Youth of Distinction Award in the category of Environment. To watch videos about Himanshu and the other YODA award finalists and recipients, visit <https://youthcentral.com/blog/2022/05/13/youth-of-distinction-awards-2022-provide-recognition/>

Congratulations, Himanshu, on your recent award. The Fish Creek Community is richer because of your involvement!

Do youth volunteers need to sign a Volunteer Agreement or be supervised by guardian?

Youth Age	Guardian to sign Volunteer Agreement?	Guardian to supervise while Volunteering?
16 - 17 years	Yes	Not necessary, but welcome
12 - 15 years	Yes	Yes
Up to 11 years	Assessed on a case-by-case basis	Assessed on a case-by-case basis

ACCESSIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT IN FISH CREEK

JOIN US FOR A TOUR THIS SUMMER

KATIE BAKKEN, FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR

With the involvement of our skilled volunteer Tour Guides, Tour Assistants and Minibus Drivers, the Friends of Fish Creek will be offering guided walking tours, minibus tours, cycling tours and wheeling tours in the park once again this year.



interesting information or a wildlife sighting or two.

In order to increase accessibility, this year we will be running some “Wheeling” Mini Tours.

These tours are shorter both in distance and in tour duration, and will provide a truly amazing opportunity

Walking Tours will run from July to October and topics will include wetlands, history, plants, mindfulness and more! Distances are typically between 2-4 km depending on the tour topic, and typically groups of are up to 20 participants.

Our open-air electric minibus is a great way to travel through the park, especially on a hot day, as it lets you cover more ground and see more of Canada’s largest urban Provincial Park. Minibus Tours can accommodate up to 6-9 participants with topics ranging from park history to natural history.

New this year are cycling tours, where experienced Friends of Fish Creek volunteers will guide you through the park landscape, stopping occasionally to share

for visitors with limited mobility who use walkers, crutches, wheelchairs, scooters or strollers to learn about the history of the Bow Valley Ranch. These tours will take place fully on asphalt for greater accessibility and will be a maximum of one hour with a maximum of one kilometre covered.

Tour dates and links to register are now available on the Friends of Fish Creek website Events Calendar. We are also planning to host the Good Grief program later on in the summer or early autumn. If you would like to receive the registration information, please email katie@friendsoffishcreek.org and I will add your email to the list to notify once the dates have been set.

Looking forward to touring the park with you soon!

THANK YOU BITTER SISTERS

The Friends would like to thank Bitter Sisters Brewing Co. for their support during the month of May. Through their Donation Libation Tap, which supports a different charity each month, \$0.25 from the sale of each Tarty Cousin Sue beer was given to the Friends. Eight hundred and thirty four glasses of Sue were sold that month and the Friends will receive just over \$200 through this important fundraiser. Thank you again to Jill and Tracy of Bitter Sisters and to everyone who supported the Friends by raising a glass. Bitter Sisters is located at 510 Heritage Drive, across from Heritage LRT Station. Photo courtesy of Bitter Sisters.



GRASSLAND RESTORATION IN FISH CREEK

EMMA STROUD, FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK CITIZEN SCIENCE & STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR

Plant Community Mapping with Tannas Environmental



As a result of two years of intense vegetation management in Lafarge Meadows, ATCO Heritage Grassland, and along Sun Valley Drive in

Sundance, we have a new need for large scale ecosystem mapping to reflect changes happening in the adjacent plant communities. The Friends joined Steve Tannas and biologists from [Tannas Conservation Services](#) (pictured above) to perform rangeland health assessments on plots throughout our management sites, to determine the cumulative effects of historical human/animal use and invasive species on native biodiversity local to the area. Fish Creek Provincial Park lies in a unique location in Alberta, at the intersection of four main ecoregions; Foothills Parkland, Foothills Fescue, Dry Mixedgrass and Mixedgrass.

The first peoples, the Blackfoot, managed local grassland biodiversity through various strategies, including prescribed spring burning and bison grazing. Local prairie plants are adapted to a natural fire regime every 5-10 years, and without the effects of grazing and fire combined, face encroachment from invasive weeds and agricultural grasses like smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*). The Friends integrated pest management approach to weed control strives to mimic these effects to enhance local biodiversity as strong competition against reinfestation in these areas.

Managing Smooth Brome in the ATCO Heritage Grassland

Smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*) is an invasive agricultural grass, introduced when the Bow Valley Ranch area of Fish Creek was an active cattle ranch in the late 1800s. We are working to restore native grasslands by tackling brome and replanting native species belonging to the local Foothills fescue prairie community. One technique we are using is called soil solarisation, which involves suppressing turf and weed species by placing clear greenhouse plastic overtop of patches treated with herbicide. Over the summer months, the clear tarp creates a warm, moist environment where the soil reaches temperatures up to 60°C, quickly germinating weed seeds.

The newly emerged seedlings are suffocated and quickly die under the plastic, providing organic content back to the soil. This strategy is being applied to smooth brome monoculture areas within, and directly to the west of, the ATCO Heritage Grassland, with a dual purpose of decreasing invasive species and enhancing the native fescue plant community described in the [Foothills Fescue Range Plant Community Guide](#) (Alberta Environment and Parks, 2017). In May, youth from [WILD Outside](#) helped dig trenches around intact native fescue plots and secure solarisation plastic in place for the season. We are grateful to have energetic volunteers returning to restore important grassland ecosystems in Fish Creek. We are also grateful to Alberta Environment and Parks, the [Alberta Ecotrust Foundation](#) and [RBC Tech for Nature](#), for supporting our new and continuing invasive species management work, helping us to address pressing issues in Fish Creek through the use of technology and volunteer efforts.

COMMUNITY PITCH NIGHT

IDEAS FOR PARK IMPROVEMENT - PART 2

KATIE BAKKEN, FRIENDS OF FISH CREEK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR

Following up the *Submit or Vote on Ideas for Park Improvement* article in the Spring 2022 [Voice of the Friends Newsletter](#), I wanted to share an update about our Special Projects process.

This new initiative invites community members to share their ideas for new projects that aim to either improve Friends of Fish Creek programming, repair or enhance park infrastructure or restore a natural area in the park.

During the project submission period, community members submitted four very worthwhile ideas, and we want to thank all those who shared their ideas with us! Friends of Fish Creek staff reviewed the proposals, consulted with partners, such as Alberta Environment and Parks and the City of Calgary, and chose one project to explore further.

The chosen project, submitted by Friends of Fish Creek volunteers Will Ratliffe and Natalie Chan aims to pilot a process to remove small plastic debris (pictured here)



from engineered storm ponds in the park as a means of reducing the amount of plastic that goes downstream and ultimately ends up in our oceans. This project was presented to the community at the June Speaker Series online event on Thursday, June 16.

The City of Calgary is very supportive of this initiative as they are aware that storm ponds tend to capture litter and are looking forward to finding out if this pilot

process is effective. We are in ongoing discussions with the City and AEP to gather the necessary resources and work out a plan to proceed.

It is our hope that this pilot will inspire the City to adopt new management strategies and/or install new infrastructure to reduce the amount of plastic getting into storm ponds in the first place.

Stay tuned to our future *Voice of the Friends* newsletters for more info about the status of this project and the results of the pilot!

THAT'S A WRAP! - COMMUNITY SUPPORTS STEWARDSHIP FUNDRAISER

At the end of March, we launched our fundraising campaign *That's a Wrap! Protecting Fish Creek's Trees and Sensitive Areas* on the Fundrazr platform. We raised just over \$1950 towards the cost of stucco wire, a flexible, durable wire mesh used to wrap trees and fence off restoration sites in the park. We are very grateful to [Tree Island Steel](#) for supplying us with rolls of stucco at a significant discount, which enabled us to purchase 31 rolls. With this wire we can wrap 850 trees, fence off 12 restoration sites and/or fence off 1033 metres of streambank. Originally, we planned to wrap 400 trees with \$5000, but because of the discount from Tree Island, we surpassed and more than doubled our goal! We will certainly have no trouble responding to beaver activity because we have all the wire we need for this year. Special thanks to donors Elaine Barnes, Greg Hooper, Katherine Svrcek, Lynn Lambert, Brad Parker, Tracy Anderson, Joshua Gibbs and Annette Jerse.

SHAW BIRDIES FOR KIDS PRESENTED BY ALTALINK

SUPPORT OUTDOOR EDUCATION IN FISH CREEK AND
STRETCH YOUR DONATION DOLLARS EVEN FURTHER!

The Friends are pleased to have once again been chosen as one of 260 local charities to participate in the Shaw Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink program. This important fundraiser runs in conjunction with the Shaw Charity Classic Golf Tournament and helps support hundreds of thousands of children in this province each year.



Through this amazing program your \$10 can grow into a donation of \$30, thus providing three children with an unforgettable learning experience right here in Fish Creek Provincial Park.

This program provides students between grades K—6 with a valuable experience in nature and helps to instill

within them at a young age the importance of conserving the natural world. By donating towards Learning Naturally through Birdies for Kids you will be helping to protect Fish Creek and other natural areas by helping to ensure that young people grow up with a spirit of environmental conservation and focus on stewardship.

Schools within the Learning Naturally program generally have a large number of New Canadians and these schools are financially not able to provide a field trip to Fish Creek for their students. For many of these children, their visit to Fish Creek is not only their first visit to this area, but also their first experience in nature in this country. By subsidizing a visit to the park, over 5,000 children each year benefit from an unforgettable learning opportunity here in Fish Creek. Learning Naturally is currently supported by TD Friends of the Environment, but their sponsorship has almost reached the end of the term. This essential program does not receive regular dedicated funding and its continuation is in jeopardy, but you can help ensure it continues long into the future. It costs approximately \$10 to provide one Learning Naturally field trip for one student and donations made through the BFK website will be matched up to 50%. Imagine how many children would benefit from a \$50 or even \$100 donation!

Our friends at Shaw have also launched the exciting Chip in for Kids text-to-give program, which enables you to triple your donation! Simply text KIDS115 to 30333 to donate \$10, that will be effortlessly charged to your phone bill.

Shaw will match your \$10, bringing it up to \$20, which the Shaw Charity Classic will then match by 50%.

Donations made through the Birdies for Kids website will receive a tax receipt from the Shaw Charity Classic Foundation. Please contribute to support children and nature, speak to your employer about donating through Birdies for Kids, or if you are a business owner, consider making a tax-deductible donation through your community-focused business. All donations must be submitted before August 31.

The Friends would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Greenfield Foundation for their most generous donation of \$15,000 towards Learning Naturally.

To donate or for more information, please contact the Friends or visit <https://shawcharityclassic.com/friends-of-fish-creek>

Photo and logo courtesy of Birdies for Kids



QUIZ ANSWER - SPRING ISSUE

This bird can fly but prefers to scurry around near roads and in tall grasses, looks like a chicken but with a red and blue head and long tail, and can be seen around the Bow Valley Ranch and Sikome. Which bird is it?

Answer: The ring-necked pheasant can frequently be seen in and around the Bow Valley Ranch and Sikome. It is not uncommon to see a pheasant spring out from the underbrush and scurry across the pathway or the road. These birds also have a very unique call, that is high pitched with a distinctive echo. Unlike other birds that fly high overhead or fly long distances, the ring necked pheasant limits its flight path to short distances between the cover and food source found within tall grasses and underbrush.

STAFF

Executive Director -	Nic Blanchet
Communications Manager -	Chris Lalonde
Community Engagement Facilitator -	Katie Bakken
Citizen Science & Stewardship Coordinator -	Emma Stroud
Citizen Science & Stewardship Coordinator -	Dylan Barnes
Visitor Services Coordinator -	Kumiko Kamiike
Canadian Conservation Corps Intern -	Justin Le
Canadian Conservation Corps Intern -	Marnel Muller
Canadian Conservation Corps Intern -	Amber McMunn

Staff contact information available at <https://friendsoffishcreek.org/contact-2>

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Director at Large -	Neil Groeneveld
Director at Large -	Michael McCreddie
Park Liaison -	Andrew Schoepf

Learn more about our Board of Directors
on the new web page
<https://friendsoffishcreek.org/board>

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 and postal code: _____

☐ 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: \$ _____

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

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

(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.