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



Introducing Katrina: Executive Director

Katrina is a dedicated non-profit manager with over eight years of experience in senior management roles. She has received a BSc. in Conservation Biology from the University of Alberta, along with a Master's degree in Geography from the University of Toronto that focused on species at risk conservation in Canada. Katrina has been actively working in environmental conservation since 2009, including several years as an Alberta Parks interpreter and as an endangered species biologist.

Most recently, Katrina has been working as the Acting Executive Director for the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation. A lifelong explorer of the outdoors, Katrina

has spent many years hiking, canoeing, backpacking, birding, and spending time in nature. She is thrilled to be joining the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society, and engaging the community in the incredible natural environment of this very special park.

GIVING TUESDAY



GivingTuesday is a movement that encourages generosity globally by reimagining humanity. This day of giving inspires our community to build a world where paying it forward is a part of everyday life.

Whether it's making someone smile, helping a neighbor or stranger out, showing up for an issue or people we care about, or giving some of what we have to those who need our help, every action counts, and everyone has something to give.

[Learn More About Giving Tuesday](#)

On Giving Tuesday, the Friends invite the public to join us in Fish Creek at the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre as we pay it forward by offering a day of stewardship! On this day of giving, we would love to have you join us to learn about the important role we play in maintaining and improving the second largest park in North America and maintaining the landscape for 4 million visitors to enjoy annually.

Each year, the Friends partners with the Tsuut'ina Food Bank to collect much need supplies leading up to the holiday season. Although this is a free event, we would like to ask anyone wishing to join us to either provide a charitable contribution or bring a non-perishable food item or toiletry.

Registration is not required to attend this event, however by signing up, we can ensure that we can provide an amazing day in Fish Creek Provincial Park for everyone to enjoy!

Join Us on December 3rd

The Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society has provided opportunities to park users for over 30 years and continues to engage the community through activities and awareness because of the generosity of people like you!

Want your donation to go further? Canada Helps will be matching funds collected on Tuesday, December 3, 2024 making your money go even further! All proceeds are eligible for credit, just in time for the deadline to claim a tax receipt for 2024.

Support The Friends



Adult-My Park-Amy Kociszewski-Bebo Grove-Quiet Reflections

Celebrating 10 Years of the Capture Nature Photography Contest

We're thrilled to celebrate ten wonderful years of the Capture Nature Photography Contest! This annual event has been an amazing journey, bringing together participants,

volunteers, and nature enthusiasts from all around, and we want to extend a huge thank you to everyone involved.

Over the past decade, Capture Nature has helped hundreds of people deepen their connection with Fish Creek Provincial Park and showcase its breathtaking beauty through their own unique lenses.

This year's winners are a testament to the talent and dedication of our participants. Congratulations to our winners:

Adult Category - Public Vote: Amy Kociszewski

Adult Category - Juror's Vote: Danny Byrgesen

Youth Category: Jacob Kearney – who won both the Public and Juror votes!

A special shout-out to our youth winner, who initially entered the contest to win a prize but ended up spending more time exploring the park and discovering a deeper connection with nature. Stories like this remind us why Capture Nature exists: to encourage people of all ages to experience Fish Creek's beauty and find inspiration in its wonders.

As we close this chapter, we hope that Capture Nature has helped create lasting memories and strengthened the bond between the community and Fish Creek. Whether you've participated, voted, volunteered, or simply enjoyed the incredible photos over the years, we thank you for being a part of this journey.

To enjoy the stunning winning photos from the past ten years, check out the video: "[10 Years of Stunning Shots: Capture Nature Photography Contest Winners!](#)" showcasing these memorable moments. A big thank you to volunteer Chris Meade for creating the video!

Here's to ten years of capturing nature—and to the countless moments of awe that await in Fish Creek Provincial Park!



Youth-True Color-Jacob Kearney-Burnsmead-Why Did The Caterpillar Cross The Branch



Adult-True Color-Danny Byrgesen-Glennfield-Sunrise

Thank You for Renewing Your Membership —and an Invitation to Join Us!

A heartfelt thank you to all our members who have renewed their support for Friends of Fish Creek! Your membership helps us run vital programs and initiatives. At the same time our dedicated volunteers contribute nearly 12,000 hours each year to improve and enhance Fish Creek Provincial Park. Together, we collaborate on stewardship and engagement activities in Canada's second-largest urban park, located in the heart of Calgary.

What's in Store with Your Membership

By renewing or becoming a member, you'll support important programs like:

- **Watershed Stewardship:** Conserving and restoring the park's ecology.
- **Learning Naturally:** Offering subsidized, nature-based education to inspire young minds.
- **Wellness:** Creating opportunities for our community to engage with nature.

Member Benefits

As a member, you'll also enjoy these great perks:

- **10% off at the Kensington Art Supply**

- **10% off at the Wild Bird Store**
- **\$40 off our Birding Course**
- **Free admission to our Speaker Series**
- **Subscription to The Voice of the Friends**
- **Voting rights at our AGM**

Your Membership Expiration

Remember, even if you are renewing or are new to the program, your membership is valid through December 31, 2025—ensuring you continue to enjoy all these benefits for the next year and beyond.

Your support enables us to continue conserving and enhancing Fish Creek for future generations, so from the bottom of our hearts *Thank You!*

[Become a Member](#)

[Renew your Membership](#)



Field Law Community Fund Program

The Friends of Fish Creek have a goal of improving the access and availability of native seeds for everyday people and increasing plant biodiversity. Our idea is to give away free native plants to backyard gardeners, community gardens, schools and other communal growing spaces.

Then, we collect seeds or propagates produced by the plants during the growing season and transplant them back into the provincial park to help restore that natural landscape.

Voting closes November 20, 2024, so vote today to help the Friends generate funds to keep this initiative going!

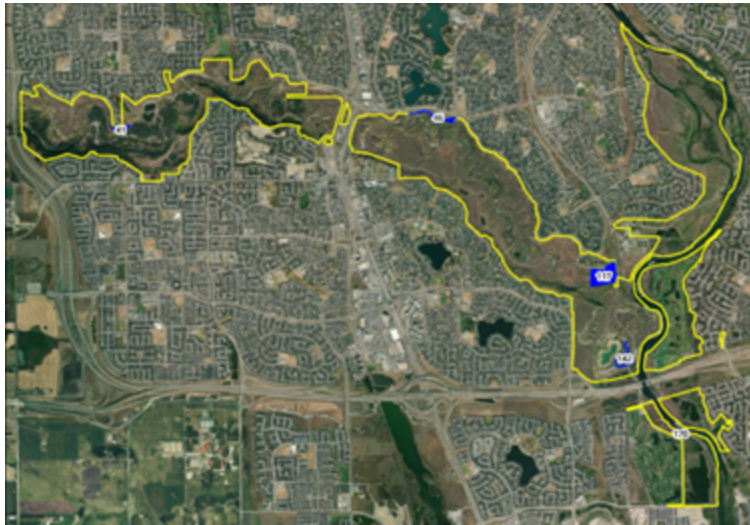
[Submit Your Vote](#)

Season Summary and Updates

We wanted to use this opportunity to highlight some of the work we have accomplished this season, and provide a brief overview of some of the projects that have been running throughout 2024.

State of Fish Creek Grasslands

In 2023, Tannas Conservation Services Ltd. performed a park wide vegetation inventory in Fish Creek Provincial Park. Tannas divided the park into over 150 polygons based on similar characteristics like topography and soil texture. A rangeland or riparian habitat assessment was performed in each polygon, producing an ecological health score for each site. With a history of extensive cultivation and grazing, it was no surprise that the most common plant community found in the park was the agricultural invasive smooth brome-Kentucky bluegrass community. Native grasslands were stripped and re-seeded with agricultural grasses when the park was part of the Bow Valley Ranch, which formed monocultures that are nearly impossible for native grassland species to re-establish unaided. The Tannas report highlighted a meager 1% of the native grasslands remaining in the park (15 hectares), despite over half the park being characterized as Foothills rough fescue grassland. This data provides a snapshot of ecosystem health throughout the park, and allows us to prioritize areas for conservation and restoration and create appropriate planting plans tailored to plant community type.



The blue polygons highlight native grasslands in Fish Creek Provincial Park. Polygon #117, located southeast of the Bow Valley Rancho Restaurant, represents The Friends of Fish Creek grasslands restoration site – an expansion of the Heritage Grassland created in 2016. This is significant as it represents a considerable portion of the remaining native grassland in Fish Creek and demonstrates successful restoration of the site from smooth brome-Kentucky bluegrass to a Foothills fescue grassland. t other styles.

Watershed Stewardship Update

The 2024 season has proved itself highly successful thanks to the collaboration of numerous volunteers and corporate partners committed to enhancing the health of our park.

Key initiatives included the expansion of the water quality monitoring and creek health program, aimed at improving fish habitats. The Creek Watch program conducted 26 outings, gathering valuable data to support the state of the watershed report that is being developed.

The Beaver Coexistence program has been rewarding, with over 270 trees wrapped to manage the beaver population within the park. Additionally, the issue of invasive plants in being addressed through the efforts of volunteers and corporate stewardship groups, resulting in the removal of over 755 kg of invasive species!

This season has established a solid foundation for future activities, and we look forward to see them come to fruition, and we want to extend our gratitude to all who contributed in making this season a success.



The above image was taken during a Creek Watch outing. Examining the invertebrates, and other organisms in the water samples tells us a lot about the water quality.



Pictured above is Enmax during one of our tree-wrapping events as part of the beaver coexistence program.

Native Plant Salvages with the Alberta Native Plant Rescue Society

The Alberta Native Plant Rescue Society (ANPR) works with private land developers in southern Alberta to gain access for volunteers to rescue plants on the site prior to stripping. The ANPR engages with developers once a schedule has been set for development. The ANPR worked with organizations and individuals to salvage over 100,000 plants from the Cochrane 1A/22 highway interchange in 2022, with rescued plants used for restoration projects and backyard rewilding. In 2023, the ANPR reached out to Genesis Land Development Corp., with a request to salvage plants at the recently purchased Ricardo Ranch property, now known as “Logan Landing”, south of the community of Seton. This partnership has been incredibly fruitful, leading to several plant and seed salvages in 2024. Two other developers have come on board in 2024,

providing the ANPR with access to a Calbridge Developers and Qualico property in SW Cochrane. Through these partnerships, the Friends have rescued over 15,000 native plants this year, providing an in-kind value of \$112,500.00 to our ongoing restoration projects. The salvaged plants were added to our grassland restoration project in the Bow Valley Ranch day use area, converting 1,500 m² of smooth brome-Kentucky bluegrass to Foothills rough fescue grassland.



Volunteers at the Genesis Development Corps Logan Landing property, south of Seton, SE. Wagons, buckets and shovels are used to dig up plants and move them to their new homes in Fish Creek Provincial Park.

Grow with Us Updates

The Grow with Us program was imagined in 2024 to create a sustainable native seed and plant source for restoration projects in Fish Creek. Native seed is scarce in Alberta, and many species are not commercially available. Vegetation that is available is often cost prohibitive and lacks the genetic diversity of wild harvested plants. Grow with Us provides free native plants to backyard gardeners, community gardens, schools, and other communal growing spaces. At the end of the growing season, participants in the program share seeds and propagates back with the Friends, creating a sustainable source of native plants for restoration in Fish Creek. So far, over 115 backyard gardeners have collectively received over 1000 native plants. Four community gardens and three schools are participating in the program, with another 1500 collective plants planted. We have received dozens of packets of seeds produced by these plants, which will be grown in our native plant nursery and used in restoration next year.



One of the Friends plots in the Deer Ridge Community Garden. Goldenrod, Prairie sage and yarrow can be seen in bloom, salvaged from Genesis Logan Landing property. We also planted plots in the Mid-Sun, Parkland, and Silverado Community Gardens. At the end of the season, seeds were collected and most of the fully grown plants were transplanted into grassland restoration sites. Some plants remain in the ground at community gardens and will be used as sources for seed and seedlings next season.

Poplar Forest Stewardship Update

The fall presents unique opportunities and challenges for planting but comes with its own satisfaction as well. Early in the season, the break from the summer heat makes working less strenuous and as the frost begins to settle in, it preserves the energy collected over the season in the plants for over the winter. This Fall, the Friends were as busy as ever, planting, digging, and preparing for the coming winter months.

With Trees Canada, we were able to plant 950 trees in a single week in riparian areas affected by lack of regeneration and encroaching weeds. This effort will help maintain the poplar forest by providing a mix of woody vegetation species that will support each other as they grow into a healthy stand of trees.

Along with the tree planting, willow staking also took place. Sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*) from Legacy Island were cut into stakes from a wide variety of individual plants on the site. When inserted into the ground and properly cared for, the stakes take root and form new plants. Together, their roots weave their way into the earth, forming

a strong embankment wherever they're placed. When used on the banks of Fish Creek, the willows in their new home help hold back soil during future spring floods.



The above image shows a solarization plot in its early stages. Covered in a thick layer of plastic, the ground underneath becomes prepped for planting.



The above image shows the same solarization plot three months later. This plot was planted with Sandbar Willow stakes.

Beavers too, have their spot in the fall activity. Towards the end of the season, the beavers work tirelessly in preparation for winter, making more work for our veteran volunteers. This year in particular, our volunteers successfully diverted water draining onto pathways away from its unplanned trajectory and back towards a storm channel at the back of Bebo Grove.

Restoration site construction in the fall was completed as well. By combining solarization methods from the grassland with planting techniques learned from riparian restoration, a new site inside of our existing restoration efforts was constructed. This site as funded by the Land Stewardship Centre includes planted woody species, sedges, leafy herbs (forbs), and grasses, as well as the above-mentioned willow stakes.

Last but not least, our volunteers also worked with us to clean up the mess after the work was done. Maintenance is one of the oft-forgotten but most important parts of the restoration process. With a colossal effort, we can say definitively that no unused

equipment, no mulch, and no leftover plants were left out in the cold.

Everything accomplished could not have been made a reality without the dedication of our generous community of volunteers. Together this year as always, they've worked to ensure that Fish Creek Provincial Park sustainably improves the quality of life for future generations.



Volunteer Luncheon – Save The Date

Volunteers are the heart of our work at Fish Creek Park. Each season brings new tasks, and our volunteers have consistently stepped up to ensure the vision of a sustainable park is maintained. We are endlessly grateful for their dedication, and to show our appreciation, we host an end-of-year gathering in their honor.

At this gathering, we enjoy lunch and lively conversation as we celebrate our volunteers with annual awards. Fond memories of past winners inspire us as we recognize those who embody the spirit of our organization. Awards like Steward in Action and Grassland Superstar express our thanks to those who have been hands-on in planting and land restoration. Our Spark! award honors those who foster connections and build community, and the Unsung Hero award shines a light on those working tirelessly behind the scenes to keep everything running smoothly. Lastly, we celebrate the year's new inductees into the 1000-Hour Club, a tribute to those who have devoted 1,000 hours to Fish Creek Park.

Join us for our annual awards ceremony to celebrate the amazing achievements of our volunteer community!

This will be held on **Sunday, December 8th, 2024** at the **Environmental Learning**

Centre in Shannon Terrace (15931 Woodpath Rd SW, Calgary, AB T2W 5M1) from 11:30am-2:00pm.

We will be in touch shortly with more information on how to register.



Corporate Stewardship

Throughout the 2024 field season, the Friends welcomed over 40 organizations, providing team building opportunities that advance restoration initiatives in Fish Creek Provincial Park. Calgary-based employers, employees and participants invested over 4,500 hours across more than 50 days, contributing much needed support to conserve our truly unique naturalized urban park!

Achievement snapshot

Removed 115 bags of garbage

Created 10 solarization plots

Harvested 898 cuttings, seeds and plants

Planted 9,730 seed pods and trees

Wrapped 27 trees

Pulled 1,278 kg of weeds

And counting!

Together, we restored approximately 2 hectares of land! This would not have been possible without the support of:

- Youth Central
- Prospect Human Services
- Optional Rehabilitation Services (OPTIONS) Inc.
- Keyera Corp.
- Ismaili Community
- WILD Outside
- Royal Bank of Canada
- Alberta Native Plant Rescue Society
- Advanced Micro Devices Inc.
- ENMAX
- Veren
- Tree Canada
- Wawanesa Insurance
- TC Energy
- Accenture
- Connect First
- ATCO
- Canon Canada Inc.
- Calgary Youth Attendance Centre
- Fish Creek Rotary Club
- Geocachers
- Mahogany Homeowners Association
- Dr. Freda Miller School
- ABI Environmental Services
- Prairie Sky Royalty
- Aviva Insurance
- Stantec
- Vermilion energy
- N2X Process Solutions
- TELUS
- Wilder Institute Conservation Champions
- Digital Commerce Bank
- Bayer Inc
- St. Mary's University
- Tom Baines School
- University of Calgary

- Trout Unlimited
- Colour the Trails
- CNOOC International
- SAIT
- Mount Royal University
- Ernest Morrow School

Volunteer days will be offered until the end of the year – we will continue to do more amazing work with the support of our community!



Get involved!



Alberta Ecotrust Foundation

The Friends are the proud recipient of Ecotrust’s Springboard grant, helping our organization build capacity to monitor the creek. With these funds, we will assess watershed health indicators in alignment with provincial State of the Watershed goals, which is integral to the development of our 5-year Watershed Management Plan in partnership with Alberta Parks.

Learn More

Thank you to our Supporters!

As a final thank you to wrap up this newsletter, we wanted to thank all of those who support us. Without them, we wouldn't be able to do what we do.



- [Alberta Ecotrust Foundation](#)
- [Alberta Emerald Foundation](#)
- [Alberta Invasive Species Council](#)
- [Alberta Native Plant Council](#)
- [Alberta Parks](#)
- [Apothecary In Inglewood](#)
- [Bitter Sisters Brewing Co.](#)
- [Bow River Basin Council](#)
- [Bow Valley Ranche Restaurant](#)
- [Calgary Foundation](#)
- [Cenovus Energy](#)
- [City of Calgary](#)
- [Cows & Fish](#)
- [ECO Canada](#)
- [ESDC: Government of Canada](#)
- [Fish Tales Fly Shop Ltd.](#)
- [Foresters Financial](#)
- [Jim Pescott](#)
- [Keyera Corp.](#)
- [Kinsmen Club of Calgary](#)
- [Land Stewardship Centre](#)
- [Pixel Imaging](#)
- [Prairie Sky Royalty Ltd.](#)
- [Royal Bank of Canada](#)
- [River Watch Institute of Alberta](#)
- [RMB Photography](#)
- [Rogers Birdies for Kids](#)
- [Southern Alberta Institute of Technology \(SAIT\)](#)
- [St. Mary's University](#)
- [Tanna's Conservation Services Ltd.](#)
- [TD Friends of the Environment Foundation](#)
- [The Venturers Society of Calgary](#)
- [The Wild Bird Store](#)
- [Trans Canada Trail: Trail Care](#)
- [Tree Island Steel](#)
- [Tree Canada](#)
- [Trout Unlimited Canada](#)
- [University of Calgary](#)
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