

The Voice of the Friends

Introducing Native Species to the 64-horse Barn's Footprint

Emma Stroud, Ecology Manager



From 1918 to 1958, a 64-horse barn stood in the middle of the Bow Valley Ranch. You can see the barn's foundation on the east side of the paved pathway if traveling east from the Cookhouse. In 1958, the barn burned down, and its foundation was filled in with sandy soil and replanted with non-native sheep fescue (*Festuca ovina*).

Over a hundred years after the barn was built, the Friends are restoring the original grassland in its footprint by removing sheep fescue and transplanting salvaged plants from the Foothills rough fescue/Parry's oatgrass plant community. We have already rescued 7,500 native plants from south Cochrane from properties being developed by Qualico Communities (Southbow) and Calbridge Developments (Fireside and Summit), and transplanted them here. After many years of being used as a feedlot, planting the first crocuses into the horse barn's footprint is another step towards reconciliation and ecosystem revitalization.

Grasslands are more than just grasses and include moss layers, sedges, tall grasses, short grasses, flowers, and shrubs.

These layers give the grassland structure and create habitat for native wildlife to shelter and nest, giving native grassland birds, insects, and wildlife the conditions they need to thrive. For the last hundred years, very few native plants have survived in the historic hayfields in the Bow Valley Ranch, as invasive agronomic grasses shade and outcompete them. In the absence of grazing and wildfire, we are mowing and removing built up invasive grass to help dry the site.

Volunteers come in every Monday and Tuesday to transplant salvaged plants, adding color, food for pollinators, and important ecological services back to the landscape. This summer we are planning to hold a BioBlitz in the restored grasslands of the Bow Valley Ranch, as well as in an un-restored grassland west of our sites. We expect this activity will highlight a large difference in biodiversity between the two sites, showing the benefits and successes of grassland restoration in Fish Creek Provincial Park. We hope to see you out there!





Provincial Park Society

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**Thank you for your
commitment to
Fish Creek
Provincial Park!**

**Help preserve the park,
donate today!**



The 2025 Field Season Begins

Ross Anderson, Watershed Field Coordinator

The 2025 field season has had an early but welcome start. This season, the Friends have already installed three pressure / temperature data loggers within the park, with the plan of installing the remaining four in Tsuut'ina nation in the coming weeks. We'll collect water quantity and temperature data from the loggers, which are both important to the fish population in the creek.



We're working to make the creek more "fish friendly" by implementing strategic stewardship activities, like planting willow stakes to provide shade and cover for fish, as well as reinforcing the creek banks to limit erosion. Rock dam removal will take place late summer. Both activities will help stabilize the temperature in the creek which benefits its aquatic life.



This year the redd survey (when biologists and volunteers head out into the field to count fish spawning beds or "nests" called

redds) will be a lot more exciting than the previous year when we found very little fish activity. This season, we have already seen lots of rainbow trout spawning activity, with many redds and large rainbow trout spotted between bridge nine and the confluence at the Bow. We hope that our restoration and water monitoring efforts allow for Fish Creek to remain a valuable habitat for aquatic life in the future!

A note from the Executive Director

Happy spring to one and all! Signs of the season are everywhere now at Fish Creek Provincial Park, and we here at the Friends are doing our best to ensure that future springs are heralded with the fanfare they deserve. This April saw us transplanting many new prairie crocuses into the



grasslands restoration areas in the Bow Valley Ranch – the first crocuses to bloom in this part of the park in decades!

In addition to many flowers and grasses being replanted

every week, this spring saw one of our most successful willow-staking seasons ever! Over 3,000 willow stakes were planted within creekside plots or in pots at our nursery by staff, volunteers, and eight incredible SAIT practicum students – see page 6 to read more about this intensive project.

June 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the park, and we are so looking forward to celebrating with you all. Come and join us in the Bow Valley Ranch on Saturday, June 7 from 10-3 for a family-friendly event, including free tours, kids' activities, food trucks, community booths, seed/plant giveaways, and free cake for the first 150 people! You can check our website for more details and an exact schedule for the day, or see the article on the next page.

The Friends' Learning Naturally program is once again partnering with Rogers Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink! Until August 31, all donations made to the Learning Naturally program will be matched up to 50%, meaning your donation will make an even bigger impact. Learning Naturally helps thousands of children in Calgary access Fish Creek Provincial Park each year, and learn about the incredible wild world around them.

See our website for how you can support this program, or join us at our Speaker Series on June 26 for an in-depth look at the impact Learning Naturally is having on our community.

The Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society focuses on community building and partnerships to achieve our mission of conserving this unique urban park, and we could not do it without the help of supporters like you. Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,

Katrina Terrill
Executive Director



Scan to give
kids the
chance to
experience
nature



Provincial Park Society

OUR MISSION:

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

OUR VISION:

A sustainable Fish Creek Provincial Park that improves the quality of life for present and future generations.

Become a Member Today!

Purchase an annual membership and support us in preserving the ecological integrity of the Park, sharing education and knowledge with the public, and building awareness of this incredible Park right in our backyards!

Member Benefits

- 10% discount at the Wild Bird Store
- 10% discount at Kensington Art Supply
- Free Entry to Fish Creek Speaker Series
- Discounts on Birding
- And more!

Help
preserve
the park,
donate
today!



Celebrating 50 Years of Fish Creek Provincial Park!

Kumiko Kamiike, Visitor Services Coordinator



This year marks the **50th Anniversary of Fish Creek Provincial Park**, and our dedicated committee of volunteers has been hard at work planning a celebration to remember!

From designing and sending invitations to community organizations, to securing sponsors and prizes, delivering posters around the city, and spreading the word—our volunteers are doing it all to make sure **no one misses this special event.**

We're excited to confirm that the celebration will include:

- **Food trucks** on site
- **Native species planting**
- **A variety of free walking tours**
- **Community partner booths** to visit and explore
- Trick Roper Bud Edgar
- Free seed giveaways
- A community art project
- A 50/50 raffle!
- Musical Act: The History Wrangler



SCAN OR CLICK
FOR MORE INFO

It's shaping up to be a fun, family-friendly day filled with nature, creativity, and community spirit.

Stay tuned for more details—and we hope to see you there as we celebrate five decades of connection to nature in the heart of the city!

1,287 hours

of team building
stewardship so
far this year!

*The TELUS team
this spring*



Restoration Work Updates

Dylan Barnes, Restoration Team Lead

Planting new plant material is always the highlight of the restoration season. Since our planting season is so short, we take full advantage of the limited time we have each year to restore Fish Creek Provincial Park's natural areas with native species. Maintaining these replanted sites plays a huge part in making sure the park has a healthy ecosystem for generations to come.

One of the main goals at this time of year is the removal of old Waterboxxes from out in the field. This equipment was originally intended to serve as a replacement for hand watering in locations watering crews couldn't reach with the truck. After Waterboxxes spend two years providing trees with water—a job well done—we remove them for reuse in other areas of the park. This year, we'll be lifting them out of Hulls Wood, cleaning them off, and storing them away so that when the time comes, they're ready to give needed water to trees in other areas of the park.



Are you interested in joining one of our programs or meeting new friends?
Do you enjoy learning new things or sharing your experiences with others?
Become a volunteer!

[Click here to get started](#)



 **SCAN ME**

Another important part of maintenance involves repairing any fencing that we've put up around the park. Restoration sites with a fence help protect plants by encouraging visitors to wander somewhere outside of these sensitive areas. Since beavers often work in the same areas as we do, a fallen tree is a common hazard that can crush the barrier protecting the site. Once these trees are cleared, we can quickly restore the fence and continue caring for the site.

These are just a few examples of our regular tasks in supporting the work of restoring the park. Small contributions like these add up over time, paving the way for bigger changes down the road.

Corporate Giveback Program

Experience fun and meaningful team building through stewardship opportunities with The Friends of Fish Creek! Spots fill up fast, so [click here for info and sign up details](#).



Willow Staking Season Is Here!

John (TJ) Timonera, Restoration Stewardship Coordinator



You may have recently noticed some stakes sticking out of the south-facing creek bank close to Bow Valley Ranch by the stream changes loop trail. Those are willow stakes, which are cuttings from willow plants that will root and grow into full trees! We've been storing stakes and willows that we salvaged from development sites through the winter. Now that spring is here, the warm weather has thawed the ground so that it's soft enough to have willow stakes stuck into it.

Maybe you're wondering why this matters, and why willow stakes are important. By installing willow stakes into the creek bank, we're setting up a system of plants whose growth will stabilize the creek bank. The underground root systems almost create a "net", or web, holding the soil and bank back so that soil erosion does not occur.

Fish Creek Speaker Series

Tickets: \$10 | Complimentary for Members



SCAN ME
TO REGISTER

June 26: A Look At Learning Naturally

Learn about the Learning Naturally program, how it started, what it brings to the community, and some important insights on continuing to deliver nature programming to kids who may not have gotten the chance to participate otherwise.

Member
perk!
\$120 value

September 11

Join us for a talk from St. Mary's University professor Mary Ann McLean on a new weed of concern, *Thesium arvense*.

Soil erosion can affect the quality of life of fish and other animals by disrupting the ecosystem, such as making the water muddy for fish spawning and making the banks inhabitable for wildlife to live in.

Some of the willows have started to grow buds, so we are hoping for them to get a head start this growing season and establish themselves for next year!

