

The Voice of the Friends

Over 30,000 plants rescued this year

Emma Stroud, Ecology Manager

Ahh, summer. A time for enjoying beautiful weather, getting outside, and—of course—rescuing plants. Saving mature plants from sites slated for development and transplanting them into the grasslands where they can not only survive, but thrive, is a no-brainer for us here at the Friends. And thanks to our developer partners Genesis Land Development Corp, Qualico Communities, and Calbridge Developments, we've had an extremely successful (if sometimes muddy) plant rescue season.

So far in 2025, across four sites, we estimate that we've saved over 30,000 plants – and these have all found a new home in the grasslands at Bow Valley Ranch! This not only gives our grassland and creekside habitat restoration projects a big boost, but these plants will produce harvestable seeds that we can then use to continue propagating and planting new plants, keeping the circular seed cycle going!

Here's a look at just a few of the incredible species we've been lucky enough to rescue this year. We hope you enjoy the beauty of these amazing native plants and grasses. If you want to get involved in plant salvage, you can volunteer to come out with us on weekends to help rescue plants for grassland restoration (or grab some for your own garden).



Porcupine grass
Hesperostipa curtiseta



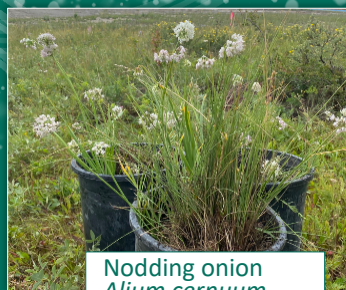
Yellow owl's clover
Orthocarpus luteus



Rhombic leaved
sunflower
Helianthus pauciflorus
subrhomboides



Blue grama grass
Bouteloua gracilis



Nodding onion
Alium cernuum



Parry's oatgrass
Danthonia parryi



Harebells
Campanula alaskana



Dotted blazing star
Liatris punctata



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Thank you for your
commitment to
Fish Creek
Provincial Park!

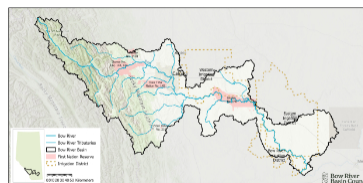
Help preserve the park,
donate today!



State of the Watershed

Ross Anderson, Watershed Field Coordinator

If you're reading this, you're probably located somewhere within one of the watersheds that make up the Bow River Basin. A watershed is made up of all the land that drains into a specific river, lake, marsh, creek, or other body of water. "Our" watershed, Fish Creek, is one of the twenty sub-watersheds that makes up the Bow River Basin, and all these watersheds drain into—you guessed it—the Bow River.



Water is essential for life—and clean water is especially vital. That's why it's so important to collect and share data on watershed health. Right now, we're working on a comprehensive report for the Lower Fish Creek watershed. This report will form part of the Bow River Basin Council's (BRBC) interactive online State of the Watershed report, full of information about the Bow River Basin and its sub-watersheds. You'll find sections in the report on water quality, hydrology, groundwater, water management, climate change, riparian health, wetlands, biodiversity and wildlife, and land use and development.

"People need water and rely on water. You need water for everything—farming, food, living—anything, so it's important to care about watersheds" – Ross Anderson

Once you have all that data, and you have a better idea of what's going on in the creek, you can manage things differently. If you find areas [that are] struggling or unhealthy, then you can focus on those to improve them" - Ross Anderson

By collecting data on creek temperature and flow and performing fish population surveys like the 2025 fish inventory, we're creating baseline measurements for our watershed. We'll use this data to get a better understanding of the creek's health and manage and protect the critical ecosystem that is Fish Creek for generations to come.

We look forward to completing our report and collaborating with our sister Bow River Basin watersheds in sharing best practices, methods, and successes through the years to come.

Read the BRBC's State of the Watershed report here:
<https://brbc.ab.ca/state-of-the-watershed>

A note from the Executive Director



What an incredible summer it has been for the Friends. While there certainly have been some challenges (including an unprecedented number of rain delays in July!) there have been many successes worth celebrating as well.

Over 30,000 native plant plugs have been installed in our restoration sites so far this year, which is an increase of 15,000 plants over the entirety of 2024!

If you've been by the Bow Valley Ranch day use area recently, you will have seen **some big changes in the Listen Garden** area, located just south of the pathway to Annie's. The Bow Valley Ranch Historical Society has finished the hardscaping of this area, and the Friends are keeping the greenery mowed. This prevents seeding of invasive plants, while still maintain enough growth to ensure the last remaining chemical treatment (scheduled for late August) is effective. We will continue to monitor the area for weeds throughout the fall and early spring, then plant acres of native grasses and flower seeds come April!

The Friends will be holding an **online auction** at the end of October, and we need your help in finding items to feature! If you want to support our work in the park by donating an auction item, please reach out to me directly at katrina@friendsoffishcreek.org.

Finally, some tremendously exciting news about the Friends' education programs. The Calgary Foundation has kindly granted us the funds to enable the Friends to hire a **full-time Education and Outreach Coordinator**!

This new position will take over the Learning Naturally program (including expanding the program to 100 days a year) as well as co-creating new free educational programming for non-school groups within Fish Creek Provincial Park. A huge thank you to the Calgary Foundation to supporting the first year of this endeavor – we can't wait to see what comes next.

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 or click
to give kids
the chance to
experience
nature

Donations made by August 31
are matched up to 50%!

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!



Out and about in the park this summer

Kumiko Kamiike, Visitor Services Coordinator

Community engagement is a big part of getting the word out about who we are and what we do. This year, thanks to our amazing summer Environmental Program Coordinator Nora, we’ve been able to start a new project, the pop-up visitor centre.

So, what is a pop-up visitor centre?

It’s our Bow Valley Ranch visitor centre, gone mobile! If you’ve been out and about in the park on Tuesdays (and select Saturdays) recently, you may have seen it. This tent and table setup brings the visitor centre’s information and resources to a different day use area each week.



This initiative has been effective in increasing awareness about the Friends and boosting our visibility across the park. We’ve found that people are really interested in finding out what we’re all about and we’ve signed up a few new volunteers and members. We’ve also had a great time answering visitor questions about park use, rules, regulations, and more.

“A lot of park users really enjoy spending time in the park and care about the park, but they might not be aware of the different events going on [or] the programs that we run.” - Nora, Environmental Program Coordinator

If you haven’t had the opportunity to stop by one of our pop-up visitor centres yet this year, don’t worry – we’ve got two more in August, plus two more Saturdays on the schedule this year. Check out the pop up visitor centre page on our site to see the schedule.



What’s coming up this fall for the Friends?

- **September 13:** Pop-up Visitor Centre at Shannon Terrace
- **September 20:** Friends @ BHS Alberta Biodiversity Festival
- **October 4:** Star Night at the Environmental Learning Centre

Behind the scenes at the Friends

Dylan Barnes, Restoration Team Lead



What goes into making sure restoration work is possible and runs smoothly?

Behind-the-scenes (or back of house) activities are the backbone that support a lot of the work the Friends do. This includes repotting plants to support their growth, giving trees a much-needed drink, or getting tools and materials where they need to go for planting work to happen. Nursery shifts at the East shop are also an important part of keeping things running.

On nursery days, Dylan and volunteers weed nursery garden beds, manage plant health, clear out dead stock, and perform critical upkeep of Friends machinery and equipment.

If you’re a Bow Valley Ranch regular, you’ve probably seen us out planting trees and native plants. The work isn’t done once trees are in the ground. While many of the native plants we use to restore the grasslands area are drought-resistant, keeping trees alive means getting them the water needed to be healthy and happy. And, as Dylan notes, if water isn’t coming from the sky – **it’s got to come from us.** Volunteers play a huge part in managing water stores and monitoring plants moisture to make sure they’re at their healthiest.

Without our amazing volunteer community, it wouldn’t be possible to accomplish so much of what we do. If you’re looking to learn about park ecology and make connections with people who share your interests, these regularly-scheduled maintenance shifts are a great way to make that happen. See Page 6 for info on getting started volunteering.

Fish Creek Speaker Series

Tickets: \$10 | Complimentary for Members



SCAN OR CLICK TO REGISTER

September 11: Do introduced species play well with the neighbours? An example in Fish Creek, *Thesium ramosum*

Learn about a relatively new hemi-parasitic Eurasian plant, *Thesium ramosum*, its phenology, and its distribution in the park. Mary Ann McLean, St. Mary’s University professor will discuss the relationships observed between *Thesium ramosum* and other plants, ants & grazers and discuss possible naturalization in the park.

October 14

Chelicerates: arachnids and their relatives - presented by Robert Holmberg, University of Athabasca

Member perk!
\$120 value

Keep on Growing with Us

John (TJ) Timonera, Restoration Stewardship Coordinator



We’ve been running Grow with Us for over a full year! This innovative project acts as a circular seed economy, providing us with a continual supply of seeds from native species. It lets us engage project participants and support them in learning more about native plants while getting more native species out into the communities we live in. Bonus! we won an Alberta Emerald Award for the project this year and are being featured in a mini documentary coming out in early 2026 – stay tuned for the full video release in January!

Grow with Us began in 2024 after a Friends team member had the brilliant idea to start saving the seeds of native species. We were initially providing participants with mature plants, but quickly figured out that plants are heavy and take a bit of muscle to move from point A to B. So, we decided to get participants involved in the plant’s full life cycle by distributing seeds instead. In our second year of the project, we’ve given out a whopping 2,000 seed packages, representing a diverse 170 species!

Grow with Us project participants can look forward to monthly communications supporting their native plant growing journey. Each edition spotlights one native and one invasive species and gives tips and tricks on seed starting and caring for native species. Some native species seeds require very specific preparation in order to germinate, so we do our best to support participants on their plant journeys!

Beginner-friendly native species

- Blue flax
- Blue aster
- Goldenrod



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

Why grow native plants?

- Drought resistant
- Built for our climate
- Beautiful and diverse!

Want to check out a native plant garden outside of the park? Thanks to our amazing partners, you can find these in several places through the city. They’re are not only great spots for pollinators to visit, but are excellent ways to engage and inform people about native species and get them familiar with them. They also act as satellite seed banks for us so we (and project participants) can continue growing new plants from seed, keeping the cycle going.

You can find these gardens in Parkland (505 Parkvalley Rd SE), Deer Ridge (2223 146 Ave SE), Midsun (50 Midpark Rise SE), Robert McLure Church (5510 26 Ave NE), Southwood (11 Sackville Drive SW), and the University of Calgary (2500 University Dr NW).

Corporate Stewardship in action

Oliver Noseworthy, Enviromental Program Support Coordinator

We’re truly fortunate to have so many incredible groups and individuals who have chosen the Friends as their place to volunteer. Today we’re sending a special thank-you to the organizations that are part of our Corporate Stewardship Program.

So far this year, with the help of an amazing 22 volunteer groups, we’ve worked to restore the grasslands, processed seeds, kept the park clean, and so much more. You’re all making a big difference in preserving and protecting this beautiful park!

This program is an opportunity for groups and the Friends to collaborate with a common purpose. By giving the gift of their time, groups can make a huge contribution to programs that help reclaim and maintain the natural ecosystems of this magnificent park. We’ve also heard that team members find the experience meaningful and feel like they’ve accomplished something important at the end of their shift.

We love to see volunteers out there helping to restore and protect the park, and there are a lot of opportunities available. Whether it be grassland or riparian restoration, tree wrapping to support beaver coexistence, park cleanup (collecting trash), or invasive species management (weed pulls), every contribution supports and advances our work.

*Many hands make light work.
With Fish Creek Provincial Park
spanning over 1300 hectares, extra
hands make a big difference—helping
us accomplish even more!*



Activity Schedule

Year round: Park cleanup.
July to August: Grassland restoration and weed pulls.
September to October: Weed pulls, riparian restoration, and tree wrapping.

Fee Schedule

Riparian restoration: \$2,500	Weed pull: \$500
Tree wrapping: \$1,000	Park cleanup: Pay what you can, we provide the supplies.
Grassland restoration: \$800	

Activities change from season to season, but we’ve got something for every time of the year! See above for an overview of our schedule (detailed schedule and registration are available on our website. See the panel below for more information.)

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](#).



Good Grief

Nature Walking Through Grief and Loss

September 3 - October 22
Wednesday Evenings



SCAN ME
TO REGISTER

What is Good Grief?

The Good Grief program offers an eight-week series of gentle nature walks in Fish Creek Provincial Park. Spending time in nature can be healing for those facing loss or life transitions. Walk 1.5 to 2 km on peaceful trails, accompanied by caring Volunteer Companions.

- Wednesdays:
Sept 3 to Oct 22
- Evening session:
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- Runs for 8 weeks
- Friends member: \$20
- Non-member: \$30



Can't make it in September? The winter session begins in January! Keep an eye out for registration starting late Nov.