

# The Voice of the Friends

## Seeds for next year's Listen Garden

*Emma Stroud, Ecology Manager*

It's almost December and you might be asking what sort of work the Friends of Fish Creek are up to when it's cold out, the days are short, and not much is growing. Well, our work actually continues year round, and we have the time once field season ends to reap the fruits of our labours – kind of literally! Through spring, summer, and fall, after you see beautiful blooms on all kinds of different species of native plants, those plants go to seed. And we're out there at plant salvages, in the park, and on land we've been given access to by our partners, harvesting those seeds to continue building species diversity within the park. After harvesting, our incredible volunteers gather weekly to help us separate the seeds from the chaff so that they're easily stored, measured, and perhaps most importantly, planted.

And this year, we've got a special purpose for all those seeds we're harvesting. The harvested seeds from 2025 are destined to go into the Listen Garden at Bow Valley Ranch – a space for native plants, Indigenous knowledge, and reconciliation. This area has been treated with herbicide to remove the invasive species that cover much of the park and prepare it for the cover crop (annual Plains coreopsis) and native seed mix we'll apply in spring. After one to two seasons, the Plains coreopsis will die, and the high-diversity native seed mix will emerge from below. To speed revegetation along, hundreds of large, salvaged mature plants like Foothills rough fescue, Parry's oatgrass, and Western porcupine grass will be planted in the spring alongside the seed mix.



*Listen Garden site at Bow Valley Ranch*

The Listen Garden will also feature several "Habitat beds" that highlight Alberta's diverse ecosystems. Beds on the garden's west side will showcase alpine/montane, foothills parkland, and Foothills rough fescue grassland ecosystems, merging into the dry mixed grass and badlands ecosystems on the east side of the gardens. These more "formal" gardens will be installed in a few years. Right now, the space consists of contoured pathways – what isn't currently path will be home to thousands of tiny native plant seedlings.

You can learn more about the Listen Garden project at <https://www.bowvalleyranche.com/iiststiik> or stop by Fish Creek's Bow Valley Ranch day use area to see the future site of incredible species diversity (and an impressive assortment of blooms once these species reach maturity).

Help us with this and other exciting projects by making a donation or becoming a member today!

[www.friendsoffishcreek.org](http://www.friendsoffishcreek.org)



Provincial Park Society

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

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

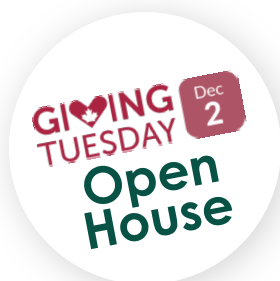


# The giving season is here!

Tis the season... to support your favourite conservation non-profit! And we're excited to announce that there will be more ways to support us this year with the launch of new Friends merchandise. We'll have a new t-shirt and pullover hoodie with a refreshed look as well as a tote bag featuring an illustration created by John, Friends Restoration Stewardship Coordinator. Check out the preview of these new items below. To sign up for notification of the pre-order opening, [just fill out this form](#) and you'll be the first to know when it goes live.



We also wanted to remind you that the holiday giving season is coming up and this is a vital fundraising time for not just us, but every nonprofit out there. Your donations this holiday season mean funding for our continued operations through 2026 and allow us to commit to projects and programs in advance. We hope you'll choose us as your organization to support this year!



Finally, we're holding an open house on Giving Tuesday to thank the community for its support –and we'd love for you to join us! Head on down to the Visitor Centre at Bow Valley Ranch on Tuesday, December 2 from 3 to 8 p.m. for s'mores, great conversation, a firepit, crafts, free tours, and more.



**Scan me for  
Facebook  
Event**



**Scan to sign up  
for pre order  
notifications**

# A note from the Executive Director

I can't believe it's already been a year since my arrival at the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society. It is an honour and a privilege to work alongside such dedicated staff and volunteers, and to meet so many of our passionate supporters. This year has seen many notable successes, including salvaging over 45,000 native plants (\$350,000 value!) and over 15 kg of seeds for restoration projects like the Listen Garden. We also held a huge celebration for the 50th Anniversary of Fish Creek, invested in new staff positions, and worked with over 90 community partners to achieve our mission.

To say thank you to our community for all your support this year, we will be holding a free Open House event this Giving Tuesday (December 2, 2025) from 3pm – 8 pm at the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre. Bring your friends and family down for a fun-filled afternoon of free tours, hot chocolate, crafts, and even a firepit to make up some s'mores! I will personally be hosting a free lantern-walk at 7 pm (weather permitting), and can't wait to see you there.

We had tremendous success with this year's Roger's Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink program! Thanks to the support of many generous donors, grant funds from the Calgary Foundation, and the matching provided by Birdies for Kids, we were able to raise over \$78,000 to support the Friends' Learning Naturally Program. With the recent expansion of the program to include a full-time Education Coordinator, these funds will cover over 100 free field trips for students in need, and support the development and piloting of some new free educational programs here in Fish Creek Provincial Park. If you are able to, please [fill out this short survey by December 1](#) to let us know what areas of programming you think would be most helpful.

Our Grow with Us program has also had an incredible injection of support, thanks to funds provided by CPKC Rail.



Thanks to their contributions, we will be creating a host of new Grow with Us resources and revitalizing our seed processing and growing

system this winter – we'll even be starting to grow some seeds indoors at the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre! Come by soon to check out the magnificent new grow tent installation we're putting together, and learn how you can help grow a native seed bank in your own backyard or basement.

Finally, as the holiday season approaches, I'd like to thank all of you for your support this year. With your help, we have been able to invest in our staff team, turn pilot projects into long-term ventures, conduct invaluable research and restoration projects, all while bringing our community together. Please help us keep the momentum going by thinking of us in your holiday giving plans. This is the most crucial fundraising time for small charities like us, as the funds we raise now will carry us throughout 2026. If you are able to contribute, please donate today – any amount helps!

From all of us here at the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society, we wish you a very happy holiday season. Thank you for all your ongoing support – you are the reason we are able to make such a difference in this park that we all cherish.

Sincerely,

Katrina Terrill  
Executive Director



Scan me to  
take the  
programming  
survey



Scan to donate  
and support the  
Friends mission!





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!



# The first Fish Creek Fish Inventory in over 30 years

In late August this year, along with partner organizations Freshwater Conservation Canada, Fish Creek Watershed Association, Alberta Wilderness Association, Tsuut'ina Nation, we organized and carried out the first Fish Creek watershed scale Fish Inventory in over 30 years! This Fish Inventory was even more long-awaited as it was delayed multiple times by unprecedented rainfall through July – needless to say, we were so ready to get out there and check out some fish by the end of August!



*Electrofishing in the creek*

A Fish Inventory is a way to collect data on the fish species living in a specific watershed – it involves electrofishing (using a low live electric current) to temporarily stun fish so they can be easily netted, measured, catalogued, and released back to their natural habitat. The 2025 Fish Creek Fish Inventory surveyed 28 sites spanning from Priddis to close to the confluence of Fish Creek and the Bow River and found fish at all but one site.

This project was a huge undertaking with collaboration from all partners and required mobilizing multiple crews on each of the inventory days. A huge thank you goes out to everyone who took the time to volunteer and make this important survey happen, from Friends volunteers to partner organization volunteers and beyond.

We're still waiting for data analysis to be finalized from the survey's findings. Data is currently being entered and cleaned, and Freshwater Conservation Canada expects it will be ready for detailed analysis by

mid-December. Stay tuned for more information and detailed findings in the earlier parts of 2026! For now, we can share some overall observations and notes on species found during the survey.



*Large brown trout in the West end of the park*

Invasive species in the park: survey teams found Prussian carp throughout the park. This species is a recently introduced invasive that has spread to many Alberta watersheds.



Rosy red minnows were discovered at one site – these minnows have the potential to disrupt aquatic ecosystems and may have been introduced from intentional release of aquarium fish. Teams also discovered one large crayfish at the west end of the park. Northern crayfish are native to the Beaver River watershed in Alberta but are invasive in the Fish Creek watershed.



*Measuring a white sucker*

Now, on to the exciting stuff! Among the native species found during the survey were longnose dace, lake chub, and pearl dace – all native minnows. We were also excited to find lots of suckerfish, species that use their sucker-like mouth to feed off the creek's bottom: white sucker, plains sucker, and longnose sucker. It's important that we found so many suckers in the creek because they are a good indicator of the creek's health and show that it can

sustain a wide variety of fish. We also found at least one cutthroat trout, as well as mountain whitefish at one site. Mountain whitefish have an interesting feeding style where they stir up sediment with their fins to expose benthic invertebrates to feed on! Teams identified brook stickleback – a small freshwater fish with spines on their dorsal fins - at multiple sites throughout the park.

In terms of naturalized fish species, the survey identified brown trout, rainbow trout, and brook trout throughout the watershed. Brook trout were only found in the upper parts of the watershed.



*Rainbow trout*



*Measuring a brook trout*



*Cutthroat trout*



*Volunteers measuring fish*

## Fish Creek Speaker Series

Tickets: \$10 | Complimentary for Members

**January 15 | Geology in Calgary**

**Presented by Jon Noad, Paleontologist**

Details and registration coming soon, stay tuned!

Coming up in 2026 - talks from Weaselhead Preservation Society, Lori Beattie of Calgary's Best Walks, and more!

Sign up for our newsletter to get the latest on upcoming events like Speaker Series.



Scan to  
sign up  
for our  
email list

Member  
perk!  
\$120 value

# Tree Wrapping Season

*Ross Anderson, Restoration Team Lead*



You may have noticed a whole lot more trees wrapped with wire cages in the park recently. This is because we've been focusing on protecting trees in key locations from beavers and other common threats. In some areas, we've been adding cages to suggest that the beavers move on to build dams on the creek instead of other more... interesting sites that tend to threaten infrastructure (like in storm water ponds!).

Tree wrapping at Bebo Grove and Marshall Springs will help to prevent future flooding in the area. The unprecedented amounts of rain this summer saw the beavers taking advantage of the storm water outflows below Marshall Springs to build a lot of dams along the canal – resulting in pathway flooding in quite a few places. Thanks to the help of our amazing volunteers, we went out many times this summer to remove these dams. Unfortunately, dam removal is only a temporary solution since beavers can rebuild their dams in a matter of days!

Our hope is that by wrapping the trees in the area near the canal we can encourage the beavers to move back into the creek where they provide plenty of benefits without flooding park infrastructure. Wrapping trees limits the beavers' food source – if there are no unwrapped trees, they'll need to head farther afield to find better lunch locations.

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

Part time Conservation and Restoration Technician Josh Gibbs has been doing an incredible job leading the tree wrapping (and unwrapping) charge at Mallard Point. Because of the high water table and protective wrapping, this area's poplar trees have seen rapid growth this year. Having a variety of trees across a range of ages benefits wildlife in a number of ways. Older dead trees provide great habitat for insects and birds like owls and woodpeckers, and younger and middle age trees are a food source for beavers, deer, and other herbivores. This is why we're continuing to plant poplars at this site to reflect the natural plant community in the area as well as wrapping across the park to preserve a variety of tree ages.

Many of the trees that were wrapped over 15 years ago have grown to the point they will need to be unwrapped or rewrapped. If these trees are not maintained, they will become girdled – where the wire grows into the tree and can, in extreme cases can kill the tree. When wrapping new trees, we try to use larger wire cages to allow for more growth and less future maintenance. Factors like tree health and how the area is being used influence whether a tree will be wrapped again after unwrapping.





# Capture Nature Contest 2025

That's a wrap on this year's Capture Nature Photography contest! The contest runs yearly, featuring different themes across two age categories: adult and youth. This year's themes were wildlife, landscape, and then and now: in honour of the park's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

We're excited to share that all the submissions have come in, the juror and public votes have been counted, and the winners selected for this year's contest! Give everyone who submitted this year a big round of applause for sharing their incredible captures of our favourite park with us—the juror vote was a difficult task with so many great shots to choose from. And congratulations to each of this year's winners – we hope you enjoy your prizes!

A big thank you goes out to The Camera Store, the Apothecary in Inglewood, and London Drugs for their generous support.

Adult - Juror Vote  
**Amy Thompson**



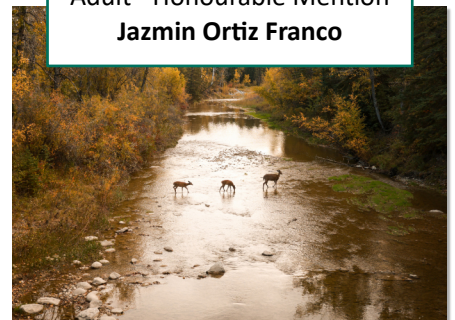
Adult - Public Vote  
**Cathy Brodner**



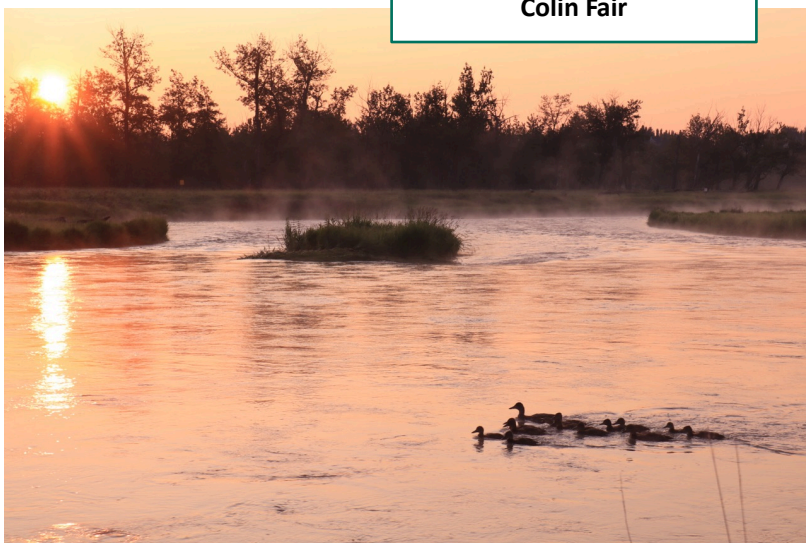
Adult - Honourable Mention  
**Brennan Gibson**



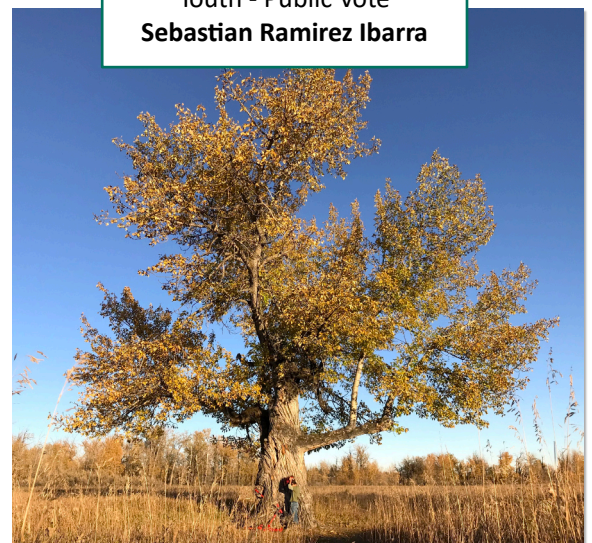
Adult - Honourable Mention  
**Jazmin Ortiz Franco**



Youth - Juror Vote  
**Colin Fair**



Youth - Public Vote  
**Sebastian Ramirez Ibarra**





# Friends of Fish Creek invite you to celebrate community

**GIVING**  
**TUESDAY** **Dec 2**  
**Open House**

**3 - 8 p.m.**

**Fish Creek  
Visitor Centre  
15979 Bow Bottom  
Trail SE**



**SCAN ME  
FOR FB  
EVENT**

## **featuring:**

- ♥ conservation info
- ♥ hot chocolate
- ♥ wildlife education
- ♥ s'mores!
- ♥ lantern walk
- ♥ free tours
- ♥ photo booth

Door prizes donated by MEC

Donations welcomed for the  
**Tsuut'ina Food Bank**



**GIVING**  
**TUESDAY**

## **Become a member today!**

### **Membership gives you:**

- Complimentary Speaker Series admission
- Discounted Birding
- Complimentary tour admission
- Discounts at local partners

**SCAN ME FOR  
MORE INFO**



## **Thank you, Silent Auction donors!**

**Because of you, we raised  
\$5,421 to fund our mission!**

WildLife Distillery, Soffrito, Deer Valley Co-Op, City and Country Urban Winery, SunnyCider, Highwood Golf and Country Club, Lighthouse Pub, Friday Sock Company, Rocky Mountain Soap Company, Deer Ridge Big T, 403 Local, Greengate Garden Centre, Sylvan Learning, Avalanca, Bow Tie Pizza, Sequoia Environmental, Colour Me Mine Canyon Meadows, Deer Ridge No-Frills, Goodlife Canyon Meadows, Fish Creek Dental, Kensington Art Market, Bow Valley Rancho Restaurant, Active Sports Therapy, Sushi Panda, McKenzie Meadows Golf Club, and Sammy's Pizza