

Chapter FC 6



Fish Creek Provincial Park
Alliance and Partnership Options

SAMPLE PAGES

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Chapter FC 6: Alliance and Partnership Options

Fish Creek Provincial Park



Contents

Introduction	6.1
Current Partners	6.3
Funders	6.3
Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society	6.3
Ducks Unlimited Canada	6.3
Marigold Foundation	6.5
Program Partners	6.6
Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park	6.6
University of Calgary Dept. of Archeology	6.7
City of Calgary (<i>City of Calgary Parks</i>)	6.9
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (<i>Calgary Centre</i>)	6.9
Potential Partners	6.10
Education and Heritage Interpretation Service Providers in the Calgary Area	
Groups with High Collaboration Potential	
City of Calgary Parks (<i>Inglewood Bird Sanctuary</i>)	6.10
Calgary Zoo	6.13
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)	6.15
Creature Watching	6.16
Frogwatch Alberta	6.16
Worm Watch	6.16
Spider WebWatch	6.17
PlantWatch	6.17
The Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council	
of the Alberta Teachers' Association (GEOEC)	6.17
RiverWatch	6.18
Trout Unlimited Canada Bow River Chapter	6.19
Nature Calgary	6.19
University of Calgary Biogeoscience Institute (BGS)	6.21
Groups with Moderate Collaboration Potential	6.22
Climate Change Central	6.22
Cross Conservation Area	6.23
Inglewood Wildlands Society	6.24
The Institute for Earth Education	6.25
Science Alberta Foundation	6.28
SEEDS Foundation	6.30
The Citizen Science Network	6.31
Telus World of Science/Creative Kids Museum	6.31
Telus World of Science	6.31
Creative Kids Museum	6.33

Chapter FC 6: Alliance and Partnership Options

Fish Creek Provincial Park



Introduction

Operating for over 20 years, the Fish Creek Visitor Services program is mature.

School Programming

An extensive suite of school programs are provided by VS staff at the Environmental Learning Centre. Additional school programs are provided by partner groups. The University of Calgary's Department of Archeology delivers programs on the human history of the park and the Marigold Foundation funds the Learning Naturally Program for schools that can not otherwise afford to take part in the park's education program.

Public Education and Engagement Programming

VS staff provide a small suite of public programs in the park. This is supplemented by a larger suite of public programs and public engagement activities sponsored by the park's partner, the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park. Finally, the park delivers a number of special events, such as Star Night, that involve several additional partners who deliver and fund parts of these events. For more information on programs delivered in the park see Chapter 5.

Using This Chapter:

Reviewing Current and Potential Partners

This is a brief review of existing and potential partners that:

- fund programs
- deliver VS services in the park
- deliver VS services elsewhere in region
 - these groups may compete in the school and public programming market
 - however, there may be opportunities for cooperation and resource sharing

When available, the foundations (Mission, Vision etc.) of these groups are listed.

Each partner or potential partner is assessed based on:

- the compatibility with the park and Park's Divisions core foundations
- their current programs' compatibility with programs delivered by the park

In some cases, collaboration recommendations are included that suggest ways that VS staff can collaborate with some groups.

Checking Out The Competition

When applicable, the current school programs of the groups and agencies covered here are listed so that VS staff can consider the competition when developing new programs.

Current Partners

Funders

Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society

Most of the volunteer activities in the park are organized through this volunteer-driven, non-profit group. It was established in 1992 and became a Registered Charity in 1994.

The society is run by volunteers sitting on a board of directors with a small staff who raise funds for specific park-related programs.

Mission: to protect, preserve, and enhance the diverse natural and human heritage found in Fish Creek Provincial Park.

Goals:

- to promote a positive and beneficial relationship between the Park and Calgary communities.
- to form creative partnerships with the management of Fish Creek Provincial Park and other groups to enhance park resources.
- to sponsor and support research and education in the natural sciences, environmental studies, recreation, park management, and heritage interpretation.

➔ Assessment

- 1) **This society is the park's premier partner and shares the park's interests.**
 - VS staff should continue to work closely with this group

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has been committed to wetland conservation for more than 65 years. DUC conserves, restores and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

DUC's conservation efforts include:

- delivers wetland and environmental education programs to teach Canadians about wetlands and the need to conserve them
- on-site habitat restoration and conservation
- environmental research
- works to change government policy in favour of wetland and habitat conservation

Mission

All Ducks Unlimited organizations conserve, restore and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

Vision for Canada

DUC is working to achieve a mosaic of natural, restored and managed landscapes capable of perpetually sustaining populations of waterfowl and other wildlife.

Goals

The common goal is to achieve better wetland habitat for the benefit of migratory birds, other wetland-associated species and people. Canadians who work with DUC are committed to our conservation goals for Canada.

Partnerships

DUC is funding the Wetlands Educator position at Fish Creek Provincial Park. This position develops and delivers hands-on wetland education programming to Grade 5 students in the Calgary area and supports education research into identifying best practices in delivering this program.

➡ Assessment

- 1) DUC is a major partner with the VS program at Fish Creek. Its vision mission and goals are compatible with those of Alberta Parks Division and Fish Creek Provincial Park.
 - VS staff should continue to work closely with this group

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Program Partners

Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park

The Friends Society runs most of the volunteer programs that take place in the park. These include:

- Park Watch Stewardship Program
 - Park Stewards provide a friendly presence to answer questions and help keep an eye on the condition of the park
- Wildlife Monitoring
 - include wildlife surveys to monitor the ecological health of the park
 - enable park users to learn more about some of the park's wildlife
 - track the populations of beaver, snakes, amphibians and other species in the park
- Resource Management Programs
 - Trail Care
 - the society organizes community, corporate, and user groups to pitch in to maintain and repair the park's trails and adjacent habitat
 - Park Clean-Up/Invasive Plant Management
 - a series of special one-day events that take place each year including:
 - Bow River Clean-Up
 - Purge the Spurge
 - Tackle-the-Tansy
 - Battle-the-Burdock
- Speaker's Series
 - the society sponsors presentations by scientists, and other specialists on park features and their studies on natural and cultural heritage topics
 - every the fourth Thursday of each month at the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre
 - except in November, December, June, July and August
- Environmental Education Programs
 - special learning opportunities targeting park users
 - wildlife tracking workshops
 - butterfly walks
 - historical walking tours
 - bird watching workshops

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Chapter FC 6: Alliance and Partnership Options

Fish Creek Provincial Park



➔ Assessment

- 1) As stated earlier, the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park is the park's major partner. In the programming arena they provide the majority of the park's public programming and user engagement programming.
- 2) At present the coordination of public programming delivered by the Friends and the park's VS staff consists of quarterly meetings quarterly meeting of VS staff, the U. of Calgary Dept. Of Archeology team, and the Friends to determine who is doing what where and when and to avoid overlap with of services. This appears to include co-promotion of events and close cooperation in the delivery of some special events. There appears to be little coordinated evaluation of programs delivered.
- 3) Apparently, as of June 2009, the University of Calgary re-prioritizing funds. This is leading the Dept. of Archeology to re-evaluate and reconsider the viability of continuing with this partnership.
 - VS staff should work with the staff of the Friends Society to develop standardized planning and evaluation procedures for public and engagement programming
 - VS staff should explore the possibility of assuming control of this program under its authority to continue its cultural and historical connections to the community.

The Ranch Restoration Society

This is a non-profit historical restoration society, incorporated in Alberta in 1995. The society has a mandate to restore and oversee the Bow Valley Ranch to its original turn of the century grandeur.

The society was established by local residents, Larry and Mitzie Wasyliw, who were concerned that The Ranch House was in danger of eventual demolition due to budget restraints and the lack of government funds. The Wasyliws recognized this site as a landmark of Canadian history that touched the business, social, government and entrepreneurial roots of Alberta.

➔ Assessment

- 1) This society is responsible for the maintenance of a historical landmark within the park.
 - VS staff should continue to work closely with this group

University of Calgary Dept. of Archeology

Since 2002, the University of Calgary's Department of Archaeology has been working in partnership with Alberta Community Development in Fish Creek Provincial Park, complementing the park's natural and cultural education programs with archaeological and historical education, public and engagement programming.

The U of C Archeology Department delivers school-focussed programs based in the Fish Creek Archaeology Interpretive Centre that is located in the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre. They also deliver some programs in-class at some schools. Their Discover Archaeology program has been developed by and is delivered by a professional archaeologist.

Program Goal:

"To instill in children a sense of pride in the human history of Alberta and a deeper understanding of their public role in stewarding historical resources."

Approach:

"We deliver high quality, hands-on, curriculum-based programs that are enthusiastically-received by students and teachers. They incorporate and encourage critical, creative, historic, and geographic thinking, while helping students develop group work, cooperation, and communication skills."

Programs Delivered:

Half-day Programs

Discover Archaeology

- for Division One (K-3)
 - introduce students to different cultural perspectives, eras, and archaeological methodologies
- for Division Two
 - directly addresses topics in:
 - Grades 4-6 Social Studies curricula
 - Grade 6 Science curriculum

The program consists of three sections

- 2 in-school experiences
- 1 on-site historical and archaeological exploration of Fish Creek Provincial Park

Potential Partners

Education and Heritage Interpretation Service Providers in the Calgary Area

The following are some of the major players in the Calgary area that provide education and interpretation services. Also, covered here are organizations that provide important information and resources that are or could be useful to the parks education and interpretation initiatives.

Groups with High Collaboration Potential

City of Calgary Parks (Inglewood Bird Sanctuary)

Inglewood Bird Sanctuary is a park area in the City of Calgary located on the Bow River at 2425 9 Ave. S.E. Sanctuary staff provide a broad spectrum of programs including the following:

One-day Programs

These programs are led by city park staff and include a combination of outdoor field study and classroom workshops.

Grades 1–3

Program titles include:

- Animal Strategies Outreach
 - signs and clues in nature that help students understand how animals and plants survive
- Feathers, Fur and Fins
 - hands-on activities with skins, feathers, skulls, etc.
- In Touch With Nature Outreach
 - sensory awareness activities
- Seasonal Cycles
 - features seasonal and life cycles

Grades 4–6

Program titles include:

- Nature Journaling
 - students document their nature experiences
- The Forest Floor and More
 - students discover the many different communities found within a forest and how they all depend on each other
- The Magic of Flight
 - features the structure and dynamics of a bird's anatomy

Chapter FC 6: Alliance and Partnership Options

Fish Creek Provincial Park



- Wetland Ecosystems
 - students explore the plants and animals that live in, on and around wetlands
 - takes place in the classroom and at a local wetland

Spectra Energy Urban Ecology (Grades 2 - 7)

- a study of ecological systems in an urban setting
- how humans are tied personally to those systems of life
- depending on the grade, activities may link curriculum outcome in elementary Science, Social Studies, Language Arts and the Fine Arts, and to junior high Environmental and Outdoor Education

Short Nature Explorations

Customized Seasonal Nature Studies: Grades 1–12

Here students study a park, natural area, green belt, regional pathway or their schoolyard in three different seasons. Topics include:

- ecosystems
- small animals
- urban ecology
- senses
- habitats and communities
- life cycles
- needs of plants and animals
- seasonal changes
- waste in our world

Pre-school

- Baby Birds
 - features eggs, nests, ducklings and chicks
- Kate's Coyotes
 - students learn about Calgary's wildlife through interactive performance, craft and group activities
- Ladybug Lore
 - an interactive program aimed at converting students into ladybug stewards
- Leaf Safari

Kindergarten–Grade 3

- It's a Bird's Life
- Plant Power
- Occupation Bird
- Travelling Seed Show
- Risky Business: Endangered Species
- Fill the Bill
- Insect Investigations
- Surviving the Seasons Outreach

Grades 4–6

- Flight Fantastic
- Forest Ecosystems
- Terrific Teeth
- Risky Business: Endangered Species
- Wetland Wonders
- Owls Great & Small
- Animal Tracks

Wetland Studies (Grades 1–9)

- Mini-beasts
- Life in Still Water

Wetland Studies:

- The Chevron Learning Pathway
 - Kindergarten—Grade 12
- Conoco Phillips Canada: Mud Between My Toes
 - Grades 4 – 9

Naturalist-In-Residence (Grades 1–6)

A program in which a nature educator spends an entire week at a school. The emphasis of this program is on the exploration of green spaces, natural areas and the schoolyard to help connect nature to students' daily lives.

Topics may include:

- adaptations
- animal signs
- art in the environment
- birds/flight
- endangered species and spaces
- food web and chains
- forest ecosystems
- habitats and communities
- life cycles
- nature recycling
- needs of plants and animals
- seasonal changes
- senses
- wetlands
- journal writing
- neighbourhood nature walks
- nature investigations
- outdoor field study and observation
- stories and legends

➡ Assessment

- 1) The Inglewood Bird Sanctuary has a mature and broad spectrum of programs. There are several similarities and differences between the city's programs and those at Fish Creek Provincial Park.

Many of the programs, focus on similar topics, e.g., wetland education. A main difference is that a large number of the Inglewood programs take place off-site either at schools or natural areas near the participating schools.

- 2) Although Fish Creek and Glenbow Ranch provincial parks are located to the south or to the north of Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, there is a possibility that the provincial park and city programs may compete for the limited budgets of schools and school boards. To limit this VS staff should:
- conduct regular needs assessments and market research for its school program
 - conduct regular evaluations of the learning outcomes of each of its education offerings in order to fine-tune good programs and eliminate programs that are not performing
 - these evaluations must go well-beyond teacher and student satisfaction surveys
 - they should document effective learning and attitude and behaviour outcomes that can be used as a marketing tool to teachers to show how and why Fish Creek education programs are of high education value
 - work with City of Calgary Parks education staff and other education providers to identify open education niches and ways that they can be addressed

Collaboration Recommendations:

Because of the many similarities between its programs and those of the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Fish Creek Provincial Park has an opportunity to share training and professional development costs with this City of Calgary site and perhaps others as well.

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Chapter FC 6: Alliance and Partnership Options

Fish Creek Provincial Park



Calgary Zoo

The zoo is a non-profit organization with a focus on education and conservation. In 2008 it was the second largest zoo in the country. Its exhibits are divided by continent.

Activities

Outreach

Each year, the Calgary Zoo Conservation Fund supports at least a dozen conservation projects. Some projects are close to home and many more are overseas.

Research

The Calgary Zoo's Centre for Conservation Research conducts scientific research in zoos and in the wild to develop solutions for environmental problems threatening the world's species and ecosystems.

Education

Zoo for a Day Program

In this program students spend the day with a zoo expert. Day-long program topics include:

- Flying Free
 - Grade 6 students investigate adaptations for flight
- Interactions and Ecosystems
- Freshwater Systems
 - features the zoo's hippo tank and water quality
- Biological Diversity
- Biomes and the Changing Climate
- Ecosystems, Classification and Change
- Population and Community Dynamics
- Custom Programs

Discovery Programs Grade 1–3

- I Dreamed of Dinosaurs
- Elephants, Giraffes, and Other Humungous Creatures
- The Bear Necessities
- Bats in your Belfry
- Am I Bugging You?
- Lifecycles of the Young and Slimy
- Connecting with Peru
- Wisdom of Gorillas

Discovery Programs Grade 4-6

- Wisdom of Gorillas
- Poo at the Zoo
- Green and Gorgeous
- Hairy Hippos and Flying Lions?

Discovery Programs Grade 7-12

- Lives of Primates
- "Life of Pi"

- Endangered Species Investigation
- Plants for Food and Fibre

Edu-Trek: Step Into the Canadian Wilds

- a Grade 1–10 hike with a guide through the Canadian wilds

Grounds for Change: The Calgary Zoo's Schoolyard Naturalization Program

Experts from the zoo help schools in Calgary naturalize their schoolyards.

Zoomobile

The Zoomobile offers a variety of curriculum linked nature-focussed programs to schools and other venues.

Chevron Open Minds Zoo School

A week of education at the Calgary Zoo. Teachers and students explore the diversity of living things and their role as stewards of the natural world.

- available to Calgary teachers of grades 2–12

➔ Assessment

- 1) The Calgary Zoo has a mature and broad spectrum of programs. Much of the program is focused on the zoo's international menagerie. However some programs centre on local wildlife and ecosystems. The zoo has the advantage of being able to use a wide variety of interesting and charismatic captive animals.
- 2) Many of the zoo's and Fish Creek Provincial Park's education programs have similar topics and topics and curriculum connections. In the future, the park's and zoo's programs may compete for the limited budgets of schools and school boards. To limit this VS staff should:
 - conduct regular needs assessments and market research for its school program
 - conduct regular evaluations of the learning outcomes of each of its education offerings in order to fine-tune high quality programs and eliminate programs that are not performing
 - these evaluations must go well-beyond teacher and student satisfaction surveys
 - they should document effective learning and attitude and behaviour outcomes that can be used as a marketing tool to teachers to show how and why Fish Creek education programs are of high education value
 - work with Calgary Zoo's education staff and other education providers to identify open education niches and ways that they can be addressed

Groups with Moderate Collaboration Potential

Climate Change Central

Climate Change Central is public-private not-for-profit organization with offices in Calgary and Edmonton that was formed in 2000, as a result of the Alberta government bringing together private and public sector leaders to find an effective way to manage climate change challenges in the province.

Its goal is to empower Albertans to take action on climate change.

Climate Change Central does not provide education or interpretation services.

➔ Assessment

- 1) Albertan and park visitors will be increasingly interested and concerned about climate change and what they can do to prevent its occurrence, reduce its effects and to adapt to it. Fish Creek Provincial Park and the natural lands held by Alberta Parks Division will become increasingly important as sites of carbon sequestering, flood control and groundwater recharge.
 - VS staff will need to be up-to-date on scientific research on climate change in the province, and provincial initiatives and policies on this topic. Climate Change Central can be an important source of information
 - VS staff can refer interested citizens to the Climate Change Central website and their publications

Collaboration Recommendations:

Fish Creek Provincial Park has an opportunity to become a best-practice model and showcase for implantation of technology and behaviours recommended by Climate Change Central. VS staff can distribute literature developed by this organization and assist park visitors to make appropriate changes in their lifestyles. This will require regular communication with staff at Climate Change Central.

Chapter FC 6: Alliance and Partnership Options

Fish Creek Provincial Park



Cross Conservation Area

The Cross Conservation Area's school program is offered in collaboration with the Calgary Board of Education, (CBE), the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District (CRCSSD) and The Calgary Foundation. The conservation area is 4,800 acres of rolling foothills located just southwest of the City of Calgary off Highway 22X. It is open to hikers by appointment only.

The site includes an education centre, Belvedere House, the focus for day-long programs led by a Cross Conservation volunteer or staff. All education programs are linked to the Alberta Curriculum and involve hiking and hands-on activities that explore nature.

School Programs

Education Programs include:

- Winter Walkabout (Grades 1–2)
- The Amazing Mini Adventure (Grades 2–3)
- The Web Of Life (Grades 3–5)
- Keepers Of The Lands (Grade 4)
- Forest Explore (Grade 6)
- Care For The Land - (Grades 7–9)

Open Minds School Program

The Chevron Open Minds School Program is a week-long curriculum-based program that integrates classroom learning with hands-on experiences that promote critical thinking, problem solving and journaling skills. Program focus may include:

- Scat, Tracks, Conservation, and More!
- Rescue the Fescue

Family Programs

Family Programs (adults and children ages 5 and up) include:

- Reconnecting with Nature
- Once Upon a Grassland...
- Halloween's a Hoot!

Adult Programs

Adult Programs include:

- Watercolours in Nature Journaling
- Aboriginal History in the Foothills
- Conservation Cuisine

Scout/Guide Program

The Conservation Area's program is designed to help complete the following badges:

Brownies

- Environmental Appreciation, Preservation

Cubs

- Black Star B Requirements, Naturalist, Observer, World Conservation

Girl Guides

- Naturalist, Wildflower, Conservation, Endangered Species

Scouts

- Pathfinder, Outdoor Skills, Naturalist

➔ Assessment

1) The Cross Conservation Area has a mature and broad spectrum of programs. The programs target participants span school groups, families and adult audiences.

2) Some of the conservation area's and Fish Creek Provincial Park's education programs have similar topics and curriculum connections. In the future, these two groups' programs may compete for the limited budgets of schools and school boards. To limit this VS staff should:

- conduct regular needs assessments and market research for its school program
- conduct regular evaluations of the learning outcomes of each of its education offerings in order to fine-tune good programs and eliminate programs that are not performing
 - these evaluations must go well-beyond teacher and student satisfaction surveys
 - they should document effective learning and attitude and behaviour outcomes that can be used as a marketing tool to teachers to show how and why Fish Creek education programs are of high education value
- work with conservation area education staff and other education providers to identify open education niches and ways that they can be addressed

Collaboration Recommendations:

Because of the many similarities between its programs and those of the Cross Conservation Area, Fish Creek Provincial Park has an opportunity to share training and professional development costs with this City of Calgary site and, perhaps, others as well.