PICTURES *and* WORDS TELL THE STORY

Nature Alberta Annual Report 2018-2019

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INTRODUCTION

Alberta is home to incredible natural spaces consisting of beautiful and varied landscapes, and rich biodiversity reflected in our abundant and diverse flora and fauna.

Today, 40 natural history clubs and their members, along with other enthusiasts are engaging Albertans across the province in the conservation and appreciation of this natural heritage. Nature Alberta represents and supports a network of these natural history organizations in Alberta.

Collectively, we are a community connected by a love of nature.

A picture may be worth a 1000 words, but sometimes a few words can also go a long way to explain what we see and do over the course of a year. So, for our 2018-2019 annual report, we asked key people in our organization to tell us in their own words what Nature Alberta and it's programs were able to achieve this year, about memorable experiences they had during the year, the positive things others are saying about Nature Alberta's efforts and activities, the gaps that Nature Alberta works to fill and why it all matters.

Then we've paired some inspirational photos with those important words and real people's perspectives to present you with a 'snapshot', if you will, of what transpired this past year.

Just a few examples of the many 'faces' of Nature Alberta's community connected by a love of nature.

BECAUSE OF YOU

We are able to do what we do because of the people who are united by their passion for ensuring Alberta's natural heritage is widely enjoyed, deeply appreciated and thoroughly protected.

It's important that we recognize and say thank you to all the individuals, members, organizations, agencies and businesses that have supported our work over the past year.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tony Blake
Lu Carbyn
Margot Hervieux
Linda Howitt-Taylor
Brian Joubert
Claudia Lipski
Rannee Liu
Ted Nanninga
Jennifer Okrainec
Richard Schneider
Kimberly Seifert-MacKenzie
Len Shrimpton
Angela Turner
Joan Walker
Liz Watts
Janice Yu

STAFF

Brian Ilnicki
Kristina Dembinski
Alexandra Frederickson
Sheldon Helbert
Zoe MacDougall
Janet Melnychuk
Kelsie Norton

MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

We are grateful for our members' support and the dedicated volunteers who contributed countless hours to supporting Nature Alberta and our various initiatives and events throughout the year such as Nature Alberta Magazine, Living by Water, the Hypothermic Half Marathon and casino fundraiser, Family Nature Nights and other Nature Kids events, the Nature Kids Chapters, and IBA Caretakers. We wish to especially recognize the volunteer contributions of:

Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute
Alberta Forestry and Woodlot Extension Society
Alberta Parks
Alberta Science Network
Athabasca Watershed Council
Battle River Watershed Alliance
Beaverhill Bird Observatory
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
City of Edmonton
Edmonton Nature Club
Ellis Bird Farm
EPCOR
Inglewood Bird Sanctuary and Nature Centre
ISL Engineering and Land Services
Kerry Wood Nature Centre
Lakeland Industry and Community Association
Nature Calgary
Nature Conservancy of Canada
Parks Canada
Peace Parkland Naturalists
Red Deer River Naturalists
Royal Alberta Museum
Science Outreach Athabasca
STRIX Ecological Consulting Ltd.
Trout Unlimited Canada
WILDNorth Northern Alberta Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation
WISEST (Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science and Technology)

Buffalo Lake Naturalists

Geocaching with the Nature Kids Grande Prairie Chapter

Edmonton Native Plant Society planting at Imrie House

Beaverhills Bird Observatory Conference

Alberta Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy

Lu Carbyn presents Claudia Lipski with Frank and Alice Harper Memorial Award

BECAUSE OF YOU

MEMBER CLUBS

Our member clubs, the work they do and the activities they engage in are the foundation for the greater appreciation and conservation of Alberta's natural environment.

Alberta Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy
Alberta Lake Management Society
Alberta Lepidopterists Guild
Alberta Mycological Society
Alberta Native Plant Council
Beaver River Naturalist Society
Beaverhill Bird Observatory Society
Bighill Creek Preservation Society
Big Lake Environmental Support Society
Buffalo Lake Naturalists
Calgary Bird Banding Society
Calgary Area Nestbox Monitor Society
Cochrane Environmental Action Committee
Crooked Creek Conservation Society of Athabasca
Crowsnest Conservation Society
Edmonton Native Plant Society
Edmonton Nature Club
Ellis Bird Farm
Fort Saskatchewan Naturalist Society
Friends of Blackfoot Society
Friends of Elk Island Society
Friends of Little Beaver Lake Society
Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society
Society of Grasslands Naturalists
Heritage Tree Foundation
JJ Collett Natural Area Foundation
Kimiwan Lake Naturalists
Lac la Biche Birding Society
Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory
Lethbridge Naturalists Society
Little Creeks and Rough Fescue Appreciation Society
Nature Calgary
Peace Parkland Naturalists
Purple Martin Conservancy
Red Deer River Naturalists
Riverlot 56 Naturalists Area Society
Stewards of Alberta Protected Areas Association
Vermilion River Naturalists
Wagner Natural Area Society
Weaselhead Glenmore Park Preservation Society
Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship Association

FUNDERS AND SPONSORS

So much of what we do is made possible by the generosity and support of our major project funders, as well as our event and initiative sponsors. Thank you to:

Alberta Conservation Association
Calgary Foundation
Edmonton Community Foundation
Government of Alberta
Government of Canada
Nature Canada
Running Room Canada
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
The Benevity Community Impact Fund

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

LINDA HOWITT-TAYLOR

president@naturealberta.ca

"Nature Alberta supports a network of local nature clubs in Alberta that operate throughout Alberta. I like to think of Nature Alberta as the 'hub of the wheel' for those local clubs, as they promote enjoyment of nature in community through field trips, activities, and educational presentations.

"What we do matters because biodiversity provides creatures with what they need to survive. Communities of people also thrive in healthy environments. If we can help people learn something about nature they didn't know before, they'll be more likely to enjoy and appreciate it, and they'll be moved to help protect it. Natural habitat and availability of sources of shelter and food are changing in all corners of the province. The shift in climate is causing stress to species in ways that have never been witnessed before. Nature Alberta exists to be a strong voice for healthy, natural environments."

"It's imperative for boards to reflect on the work they do, how and why and to assess the effectiveness of the work and programs offered. Reviewing and renewing themselves on a regular basis helps a board review goals, direction, and procedures to ensure we continue to achieve our goals in meaningful ways. In 2018-2019, we began a process of board renewal first introduced by the Board in 2014 that reinvigorates the present Board make-up while creating opportunities to attract new board members with specific skills."

"At a board governance workshop this past year we discussed board and committee roles and expectations. We are all volunteers and we each have an essential role to contribute to a team. To effectively manage our time, it's important that each person understands what talents and skills he or she has and what their particular niche or role is in relation to that of hired staff. This helps prevent misunderstandings, helps each person grow and feel valued as an effective member of the team while contributing to the successful working of the Board.

"Local clubs rely primarily on volunteers. They do what they do out of their love of nature, a sense of community, and a yearning to learn and share more. As an organization, it's important for Nature Alberta to continue to reach out, support these clubs, their volunteers and their needs. If we truly want Albertans to love and protect nature we need to support the people at a community level to help deliver the nature experience to others. As long as we continue to support clubs, their programs and activities, we are working towards saving this gift of nature that we have in Alberta.

"Financial sustainability is a priority for Nature Alberta. We rely entirely on grants and donations to support our operations and programs, which makes it difficult to plan for long-term programming and organizational sustainability. In 2018-2019 we've been assessing the effectiveness of our programs and developing a plan to finance the ones we want to retain and exploring how to engage participants in alternative programs and collaborations that may generate revenue. In the fall of 2018, with a special donation from our Past President, Lu Carbyn, the board established the Nature Alberta Endowment Fund through the Edmonton Community Foundation, laying the foundation that will help support organizational funding in the future. We also continue to access AGLC funds and our ED remains diligent in managing our program resources effectively."

"Turning our thoughts to the future, we remain confident about the goals for renewal we've set for ourselves for the coming year. We are also looking forward to celebrating Nature Alberta's 50th year. To commemorate that special milestone, we intend to launch an anniversary campaign to celebrate the many local clubs aligned under the Nature Alberta umbrella, and to garner even more recognition and support amongst Albertans as we continue working to care for, enjoy and protect Alberta's species and natural spaces together."

Email info@naturealberta.ca to request copies of our program brochures or visit naturealberta.ca to learn more.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BRIAN E. ILNICKI

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"Nature Alberta provides opportunities for people who are interested in nature and natural systems to participate with other, like-minded individuals in a variety of nature-based, learning-oriented events and outings throughout the province. This is important as it allows people to be active in the outdoors in a safe and, often organized setting, giving them a chance to expand their knowledge about and experience with natural systems."

"Through our core programs, Nature Alberta had an amazing year providing opportunities for kids, families and individuals to participate in a variety of programs and events. These range from our Family Nature Nights and other Nature Kids programming, right through to working on shoreline rehabilitation projects at central Alberta lakes, and re-engaging IBA Caretakers."

"I am constantly amazed at the dedication of volunteers, their commitment to local and regional events and activities. These people contribute countless hours to helping Nature Alberta be a successful, primarily volunteer-run, organization."

"For nearly 50 years, Nature Alberta has been viewed as a stable and thoughtful organization when it comes to advocating for nature in the province. Our members and supporters are telling us to keep up this tradition and to look for ways to constructively advance issues of importance to the membership to the appropriate levels of government and industry through a partnership–based approach that seeks solutions and resolutions to these issues."

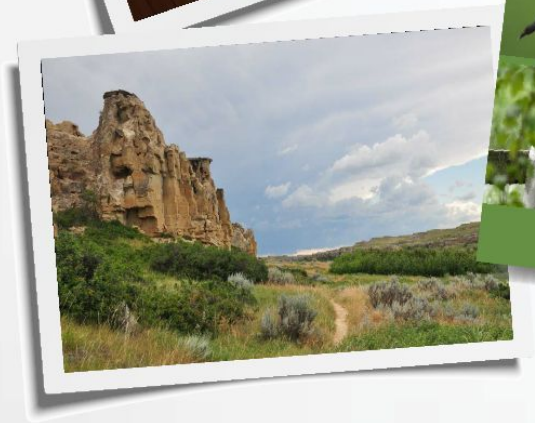
"The strategic partnership between Land Stewardship Centre and Nature Alberta continues to grow and add value and efficiency to the operational aspects of both organizations, as well as to our respective products and programs. We look forward to continuing that relationship."

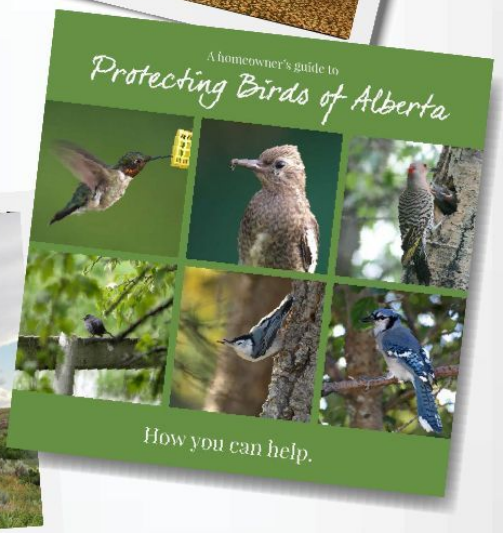
"Nature Alberta is a purposeful organization with a rich history, one that we should build on and continue to grow throughout our next half century."

Kimiwan Lake IBA

Cats & Birds Workshop 2

Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity Network Symposium





BIRDS & BIODIVERSITY

KELSIE NORTON

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"The Birds and Biodiversity program contains many different components that make it successful. One of our major roles is being the Provincial Coordinator of the Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) Program in Alberta. Recently, we also brought Cats and Birds initiative to Edmonton, creating a committee of bird and cat lovers to promote saving bird lives and keeping cats safe."

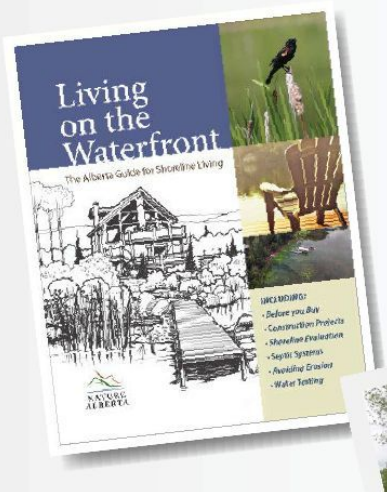
"Through the Birds and Biodiversity program we host and attend educational and inclusive events and field trips throughout Alberta. We continue to develop highly popular, accessible resources such as information booklets (e.g. A Homeowners Guide to Protecting Birds of Alberta) and field guides (e.g. Shorebird Checklist) that are suitable for all ages and abilities."

"Through the Birds and Biodiversity program we elevate communities that not only have an interest in the aesthetics of birds but also may be experiencing issues around conservation such as protecting habitat and populations, learning about their ecology and truly engaging the general public about the import role they play in the ecosystem."

"In addition to continuing to support the Birds & Cats initiative, in 2018 – 2019 we created a user-friendly booklet called A Homeowners Guide to Protecting Birds of Alberta, and we focused a great deal of our effort engaging and communicating better with the IBA Caretakers."

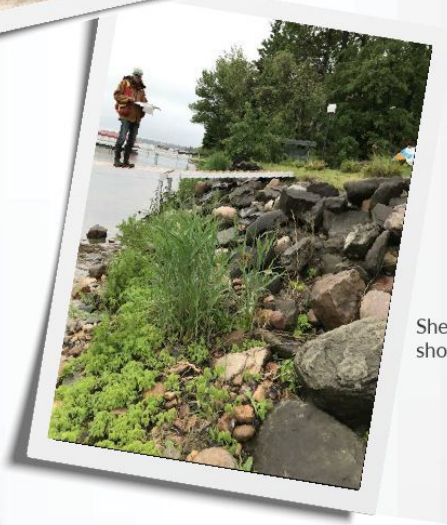
"If I had to use one word to describe peoples' experience with the program this past year, I believe it would be 'enlightenment.' From being able to meet with experienced naturalists who pass along their knowledge and connections, to captivating families and fresh minds that have little to no knowledge of various nature-based topics, people are experiencing and understanding birds, biodiversity and nature in ways they haven't before."

"Through this program, over the past year we've made significant effort to sustain connections as well as build new ones."

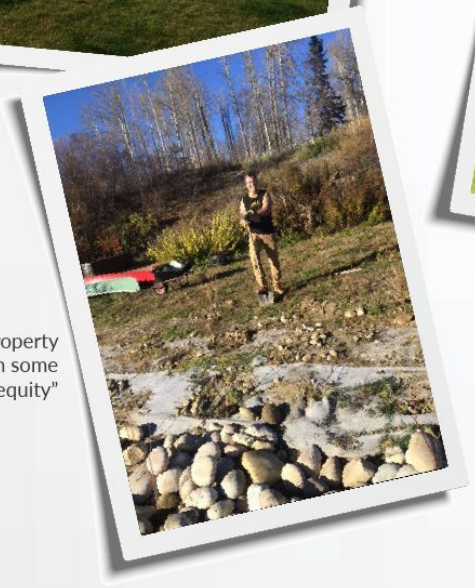


Newly planted seedlings along the lakeshore

LBW staff and volunteers



Sheldon assessing a shoreline



A lakefront property owner putting in some 'sweat equity"

LIVING BY WATER

SHELDON HELBERT

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"Through the Living by Water (LBW) program we work primarily with people who live and/or recreate lakeside. The purpose is to improve the ecology of lake ecosystems to the betterment of fish, their habitat and the recreational utility enjoyed by people."

"In 2018-2019, we concluded a three-year pilot program that saw staff work with lakeshore property owners, planting nearly 1,300 native plants (35 different species) on 29 properties on the shoreline of Wabamun Lake. These naturalization efforts are part of a broader, ongoing commitment to encouraging good stewardship among lakeside property owners."

"Our greatest reward is seeing the look of satisfaction on residents' faces at the conclusion of the implementation of one of our naturalization plans that are designed to soften the hard edges of their lakeside properties integrating their land with the natural lake ecosystem."

"Overall, participants have been very pleased with the program. They appreciate not only the knowledge and experience, but also the good old common sense that staff bring to the table."

"People love the natural looking shorelines that are the result of all these efforts, and recognize how important naturalization is for maintaining ecological health of the lake, preventing erosion and supporting slope stability."

"Another benefit of these naturalization plans is the need for less regular gardening. Once these areas become established (which in reality can take two to five years) there is less mowing, weeding, watering, no need for fertilizers. In the long run that saves the owner time and money."

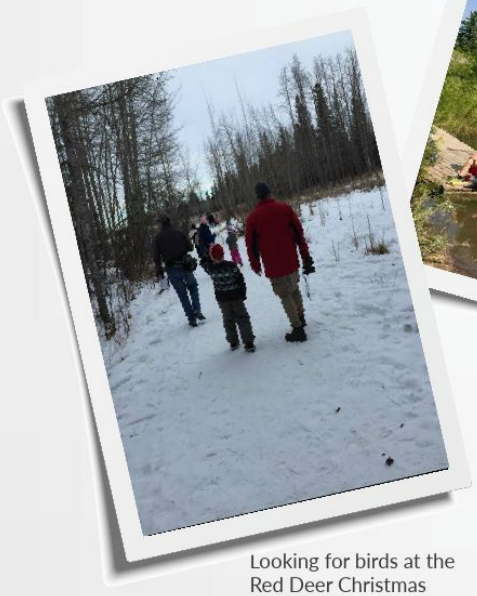
"Folks like what Nature Alberta is doing; being proactive, physically out there implementing positive actions."

"Trees" Family Nature Night
Photo: Root for Trees

Learning about moss on the nature walk at the Edmonton Women and Girls in Nature event

Learning about trout at the "Water" Family Nature Night

Pond dipping at the Morinville BioBlitz



Looking for birds at the Red Deer Christmas Bird Count 4 Kids

NATURE KIDS

ZOE MACDOUGALL

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"The Nature Kids program was established to provide extracurricular opportunities for children and families in Alberta to increase time outdoors, encouraging nature exploration, scientific investigation, and fostering stewardship attitudes. We offer, with help from our local volunteer Chapter Leaders in various locations across the province, free nature based events for families across the province including Field Trips, BioBlitzes, Family Nature Nights and more."

"Nature Kids matters because we offer opportunities for families all across the province to explore nature in their area that they may never have the opportunity to otherwise. We encourage families to get outside and learn more about their environment while having fun, spending time together and being active. With help from our local nature and environment experts, we bring new knowledge about nature to the families of Alberta and through these events, we hope to develop stewardship and conservation attitudes in Alberta families."

"Nature Kids accomplished many things in 2018-2019. We hosted 22 nature based events across the province, everything from Christmas Bird Counts 4 Kids to Summer and Winter Family Nature Nights, to BioBlitzes and Women and Girls in Nature events. We attended 17 nature outreach events all over Alberta such as World Migratory Bird Day events, Farmer's Markets, Bluebird Festival, and Bug Jamboree. We saw approximately 4700 people participating in our events or attending the outreach events we participated in. We reached about 100 families through our Nature Alberta membership with our NatureWILD magazine in the Spring, Summer and Fall as well as our Nature Heroes booklet. We also piloted our Women and Girls in Nature events where we brought in women in the nature and environment field to talk to young girls about what career opportunities exist for those interested in the natural field."

"There were many moments that were memorable for me in 2018-2019 so it is tough to choose just one. I loved when we were able to bring in the live educational porcupine from WILDNorth Wildlife Rescue to meet with our families at our Morinville BioBlitz or when we brought a trailer full of trout to Gold Bar Park for our Water Family Nature Night and the kids got to see and touch the fish or when families got to learn all about arctic animals and see a walrus skull and narwhal tusk, those are some of the memories that stand out for me."

"Families always have wonderful things to say about our program. Parents are always so appreciative of all the time and energy we put in to hosting these free events and one mom said to me that we put on such high quality events. Families look forward to our Family Nature Nights every summer and plan their time around being able to attend them every year which is such a positive thing to hear."

"I distinctively remember one little girl who came to our "Water" Family Nature Night last summer. When the event was over and they were walking back to their car, I heard her say to her dad, 'This was the best day ever!' Hearing this made me feel good about the effort we put in to make our events as educational and fun as possible."

Nature Alberta
January 21
The Alberta Lake Management Society is accepting applications for summer 2019 LakeWatch technician positions. Please send your resume and cover letter to info@alms.ca by February 24, 2019: https://alms.ca/current-opportunities/
ALMS.CA
Current Opportunities | ALMS
We are now accepting applications for summer 2019 LakeWatch...
20 Shares
10
Share
LinkedIn
People
Nature
Alberta
Nature Alberta
Non-profit organization
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada · 500+ connections
Join to Connect
Nature Alberta
Company Website
Nature Alberta
4,681 Tweets
Nature Alberta @NatureAlberta · Aug 22, 2018
We are hosting another special 'Women and Girls in Nature' event on Sunday September 9th in #yyc ! We have many lovely ladies coming from several wonderful organizations to chat all about what it is like to have a career in the #environmental field!
Kids
Women and Girls in Nature
CALGARY & AREA
naturealberta
naturealberta Last week, Nature Alberta's dedicated Cats and Birds Committee organized an Animal Facility Tour at Wild North and the Edmonton Animal Care and Control Centre. There is an immense amount of knowledge and commitment from these organizations who have assisted us share the Cats and Birds message. Thank you to both facilities for the informative experience and for being a part of the Cats and Birds campaign which aims to keep Edmonton's cats and birds safe. (Pic 1. Rosie the Wild North ambassador) (Pic. 2. Local citizen Science project on feral cat colonies in Edmonton) The Keeping Cats Safe and Saving Bird Lives campaign is a national effort led
Liked by kbnort and 71 others

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

ALEXANDRA FREDERICKSON

communications@naturealberta.ca

"Communications and outreach is something we are deeply committed to. It's how we connect with people. Through our efforts we directly and regularly engage with member clubs, partners and funders, municipalities, the public (specifically those interested in our core programs and those looking for volunteer opportunities), as well as naturalists of all ages across Alberta."

"We continue to put a lot of work into promoting Nature Alberta initiatives across the website (naturealberta.ca) and all social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn) to increase engagement with and participation of our members and the broader public. Our social media posts are applicable to all Albertans who wish to learn more about how to conserve, appreciate and enjoy our natural heritage. We also extensively utilize our social media platforms and other available communication tools (Nature Alberta e-News, the online calendar and Nature Alberta Magazine) to promote and support our member clubs and other organizations that are part of our community connected by a love of nature. Our efforts continue to pay off; in 2018 – 2019 we grew our collective social media following by 14%!"

"In all, staff collectively attended more than 60 events this past year, including those hosted by our members clubs, partner and funder organizations, as well as community events, conferences and workshops in order to network, learn, promote and build capacity for Nature Alberta."

"I've been told time and time again by people I meet at events how important it is to be out in the community and actively engaging with others. People still seek and enjoy that human connection through networking events. Meeting face to face, being active within the community and forging personal connections often results in formal partnerships and collaboration between organizations. By having a presence at all the events NA does, and having people tell you they attended, heard about, appreciated and enjoyed various Nature Alberta programs, events and initiatives shows everyone (people, partners and our member clubs) that we are committed and dedicated to not only bettering the community we serve, but also being an active part of it."

NATURE
ALBERTA

A community connected by a love of nature.

naturealberta.ca

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