





"A community connected by a love of nature."

Nature Alberta serves as a strong voice and active champion for the greater appreciation and conservation of nature in Alberta. We are structured as a federation composed of 46 nature clubs and over 1,500 individual members from across the province. This Annual Report summarizes our achievements over the past year (from November 1, 2022 to October 31, 2023). Our operations are focused on public outreach and support of the nature club network, as directed by our strategic plan. We saw continued growth in all components of our public outreach program, including the popular Nature Kids program, Nature Alberta Magazine, and our various online communications. More people than ever are learning about and engaging in nature through the efforts of Nature Alberta. The Nature Network, which involves nature clubs and other partners, also continued to expand, particularly in the areas of nature education, citizen science, and conservation. In the pages that follow, you will find detailed summaries about what we accomplished over the past year in all of these program areas. Making all of this possible is a network of volunteers and supporters, and we thank all of them for their amazing efforts. We truly are a community connected by a love of nature.

Our Vision

Alberta's natural heritage is widely enjoyed, deeply appreciated, and thoroughly protected.

Our Mission

To be a strong voice and an active champion for the greater appreciation and conservation of Alberta's natural environment.

Our Goals

- Goal 1. Advance nature education and appreciation within Alberta
- Goal 2. Promote nature conservation in Alberta
- Goal 3. Support Nature Alberta's member clubs
- Goal 4. Build organizational capacity and sustainability



Nature Alberta provides a unified voice for conservation education and advocacy in Alberta. That collective voice is made up of many people who share a passion for nature. From our volunteer board, to our dedicated staff, to the membership of clubs who foster that love of nature, to the funders who make our work possible, we gratefully acknowledge the efforts of everyone who contributes to Nature Alberta's ongoing success.

2023 Board of Directors

President Kim MacKenzie Lu Carbyn Vice President Jim Donohue Treasurer Erin McCloskey Secretary Liz Watts Past President Tony Blake Director Cheryl Bozarth Soll Director Director Shane Hammell Linda Howitt-Taylor Director Kaya Konopnicki Director Claudia Lipski Director

Staff

Richard Schneider, Executive Director Stephanie Weizenbach, Program Director Kethu Mendis, Nature Kids Coordinator Abigail Stosky-Rahman, Program Coordinator (until February 2022) Susan May, Communications Director Jason Switner, Magazine Managing Editor Jennifer Brownridge, Bookkeeper

Member Clubs

Alberta Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy

Alberta Invasive Species Council

Alberta Lake Management Society

Alberta Lepidopterists' Guild

Alberta Mycological Society

Alberta Native Bee Council

Alberta Native Plant Council

Alix Nature Trail Society

Beaverhill Bird Observatory Society

Big Lake Environment Support Society

Bighill Creek Preservation Society

Boreal Avian Research & Conservation

Association

Buffalo Lake Nature Club

Calgary Area Nestbox Monitors Society

Calgary Bird Banding Society

Camrose Wildlife Stewardship Society

Cochrane Environmental Action Committee

Crooked Creek Conservancy Society of Athabasca

Crowsnest Conservation Society

Edmonton Native Plant Society

Edmonton Nature Club

Ellis Bird Farm

Entomological Society of Alberta

Fort Saskatchewan Naturalist Society

Friends of Blackfoot Society

Friends of Elk Island Society

Friends of Jasper National Park

Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre

Society

Grasslands Naturalists Society

JJ Collett Natural Area Foundation

Kimiwan Lake Naturalists

Lac La Biche Birding Society

Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory

Lethbridge Naturalists Society

Nature Calgary

Peace Parkland Naturalists

Pioneer North Trail Foundation

Purple Martin Conservancy of Canada

Red Deer River Naturalists

Riverlot 56 Natural Area Society

Stewards of Alberta's Protected Areas Association

Vermilion River Naturalist Society

Wagner Natural Area Society

Wainwright Wildlife Society

Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society

Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship

Association

Funders

A. Lawrence Berry Family Environment Fund

Alberta Conservation Association

Alberta Culture

Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis

Commission

Benevity Community Impact Fund

City of Edmonton

Edmonton Community Foundation's Endowment

Matching Program for Environmental

Organizations

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Nature Canada

Northwest Red Water Partnership

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



Tature Alberta's operations are divided into three integrated program areas: public outreach, the Nature Network, and organizational sustainability.

Our outreach program provides nature education to the general public and promotes nature appreciation and conservation across Alberta. Our flagship outreach program is Nature Kids, which provides hands-on, nature-related experiences for families. Direct interaction with individuals — especially young people — is a powerful way of fostering an interest in nature and recruiting new members to the conservation community. We were able to host seven in-person Family Nature Nights this summer, in Edmonton, Red Deer, and Calgary. These events were attended by 846 parents and kids. We also hosted a variety of other events over the course of the year, including the revival of the Snow Goose Festival. Additional details about our outreach program are provided in the Public Outreach report.

Nature Alberta also engages in extensive outreach online. These efforts are organized around three core themes: "Learn About Nature," "Experience Nature," and "Protect Nature." We reach the public through our digital magazine (also available in print form), social media channels, electronic newsletter, and website. The magazine is a high-quality publication featuring natural history articles about Alberta's wildlife and in-depth analysis of conservation issues written by field biologists, university researchers, and other experts. Our website and social media posts deliver content from the magazine as well as information on nature-related events and guidance on engaging and protecting nature on a personal level. More information is provided in the Online Outreach report.

Besides delivering educational content, our public outreach program is used to raise awareness of important conservation issues and deliver calls to action. Some of the issues we engaged in over the past year include the protection of various species at risk, the proposed expansion of irrigation in southern Alberta, oilsands mining in the McClelland fen, the UCP's sovereignty legislation, and other environmental policies. Together with other conservation organizations, we encouraged individuals from across the province to write to the government about their concerns with issues.

Our second program area is the Nature Network, which is primarily intended to support Alberta's naturalist community. The Network consists of 46 nature clubs located across the province along with over 1,500 individual members of Nature Alberta itself. Each club has a designated liaison who communicates directly with our Program Director about club activities and concerns. Through the Nature Network, Nature Alberta provides a wide range of services to Alberta's naturalist clubs and



their members. An example is the province-wide Nature Network speaker series hosted on Zoom. Additional details are provided in the Nature Network report.

The Nature Network is also where our citizen science and Important Bird Areas programs are housed. There is extensive overlap between these two programs, the activities of nature clubs, and the interests of the broader naturalist community. Coordination of these interrelated efforts through the Nature Network provides important synergies and increased effectiveness.

Our engagement in citizen science continues to expand. We now serve as the central hub for citizen science projects across the province. For anyone wanting to engage in or learn about citizen science, Nature Alberta's website provides the best starting point. We also help coordinate specific projects and we promote citizen science through public presentations, magazine articles, and social media posts.

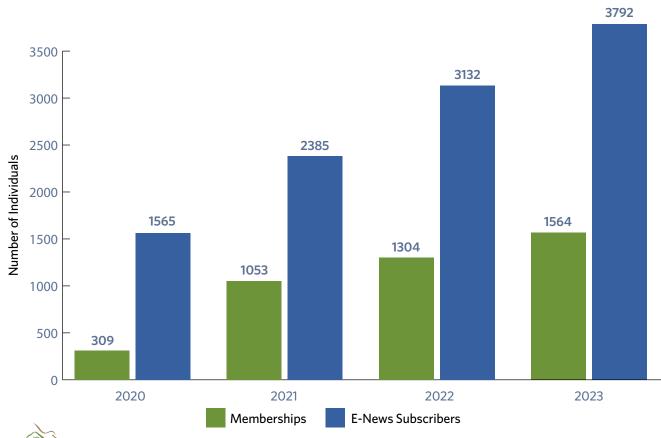
Our final program area is organizational sustainability. Efforts here were focused on growing our membership, growing our volunteer network, and diversifying our funding base. Membership continues to grow well, increasing by 20% over the past year to 1,564 members. Growth of our supporters, defined as individuals that sign up to receive our electronic newsletter and other communications, has also been excellent. Our base of supporters increased by 21% over the past year to 3,792 individuals. Supporters receive the same communications as members and serve as an important body for our education and conservation outreach efforts and for funding appeals.





With Covid behind us, our finances stabilized this year and we were able to secure sufficient funding to bring our Nature Kids coordinator up to full time. In addition, we continued to add to our endowment fund, held with the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF). We view the endowment as a critical contributor to long-term organizational stability. Once large enough, the endowment will generate a steady stream of unrestricted income, reducing our reliance on foundation grants that must be applied for anew each year.

Membership and E-News Mailing List Growth





The ECF provides a matching program for contributions, which has helped our endowment grow rapidly. We began the endowment in 2019, with \$24,040 in donations, matched almost 2:1 by the ECF. The 2:1 matching program was again available in 2021, and we contributed the maximum amount of \$50,000. In 2022, the matching was set at 1:1, and we contributed the maximum of \$50,000, bringing the total to \$296,956 at the end of 2022. The ECF is again providing 1:1 matching in 2023 and we aim to again contribute \$50,000 by year end, half of which is to come from our supporters and half from Nature Alberta's reserve fund.

I will be retiring this fall, after serving almost four years as Executive Director. Steph Weizenbach, who has been Nature Alberta's Program Director for the past three years, will be taking my place. Steph is the person I have most relied on during my tenure as Executive Director, and I can't thank her enough for all the support she has given me and for her tireless efforts on behalf of Nature Alberta. Our organization is in good hands. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Susan May and Jason Switner. They have been with me from the very beginning and have done an outstanding job leading our communications, routinely going well above the call of duty. Last but not least, I would like to thank the other staff I've worked with, our board members, and the many volunteers I have collaborated with over the years. We really are a community connected by a love of nature, and this is ultimately what makes Nature Alberta work.





Tature Alberta added four more clubs to our Nature Network for a total of 46 collaborative clubs across the province. We support the Nature Network through a variety of benefits, including:

- 1. An online club forum and monthly updates through the Nature Network News
- Network library filled with valuable resources
- 3. Promotion of clubs and events to a wide audience
- 4. A shared Zoom account at no additional cost
- 5. The Nature Network Speaker Series
- 6. Free access to Canva Pro non-profit account
- 7. An online photo library

- 8. Volunteer and job recruitment support
- 9. Support for citizen science initiatives
- 10. Support for stewardship and advocacy initiatives
- 11. An opportunity to participate in an affordable group insurance program
- 12. The ability to partner on grant applications requiring charitable status
- 13. A print copy of Nature Alberta Magazine
- 14. Opportunities to collaborate on events, projects, and resources

To effectively manage all of these great resources, Nature Alberta continuously updates the *Nature Alberta Member Club Manual*. The 2023 manual included an offer of free lifetime Nature Alberta membership to all member club members. Clubs were offered free resources including books and pamphlets to provide to members, volunteers, and public to raise awareness for environmental conservation issues. Nature Alberta's Nature Kids collaborated with ten Member Clubs to deliver nature programming at events to inspire youth to nurture a long-lasting connection to nature.

The 2022-23 Nature Network Speaker Series was a wild success broadcasting 16 educational Zoom presentations on a variety of environmental topics to 1,405 total live audience. Presenters were recruited and featured by seven Member Clubs with Nature Alberta to be shared with the entire Nature Network and the general public. The series included a thought-provoking presentation by our very own Executive Director, Dr. Richard Schneider, on the Long and Winding Road to Caribou Recovery in Alberta, and an inspiring presentation by our Patron, John Acorn, on Counting Winter Bugs. Many presentations were recorded and continue to reach even more people through our Nature Network Speaker Series playlist on YouTube, where the available videos collectively have over 2,780



views. Thank you to all the Nature Network Speaker Series presenters who volunteered their time to share their knowledge and stories with us.

Nature Alberta focused particular support on promoting and coordinating citizen science and conservation initiatives. We supported provincial compilation and coordination volunteers to lead the May Species Count and Alberta Biodiversity Challenge. Nature Alberta also joined the Alberta Citizen Science Community of Practice Steering Committee to further support and promote citizen science in our community. Nature Alberta partnered with MacEwan University professors to address the information gap of the data deficient Franklin's Ground Squirrel, promoting the use of citizen science to submit observations. MacEwan partners published educational resources, including a Guide to Squirrels of Alberta, which is posted on our webpage along with a Franklin's Ground Squirrel ringtone to help raise awareness of the collaborative project. Nature Alberta continues to act as the regional coordinator for the Important Bird Area Caretakers, actively recruiting and supporting volunteers and Member Club representatives to complete bird surveys and contribute to federal assessments of these areas for consideration for Key Biodiversity Area criteria. Nature Alberta also serves on the growing Bird Friendly Edmonton Team to raise awareness for urban conservation efforts to protect birds and collaborate with other Alberta-based teams.

46
Member
Clubs

16
Nature Network
Speaker Series
Talks

1,405
Live Audience

2,784

YouTube Views



From winter 2022 through fall 2023, Nature Alberta's Nature Kids program produced engaging virtual content including Do-It-Yourself activities, Fun Facts, My Big Alberta Backyard articles, and the newly updated *Nature Heroes* book. The *Nature Heroes* book inspires youth to explore, observe, and investigate nature through eleven do-it-yourself activities that will certify youth as Nature Heroes upon completion. The diverse characters — including Stuart the Swift Fox, the Nature Kids Mascot, and his friends Shameena the Snake, Oakeley the Owl, and Buzz the Bee — provide engaging content to learn about Alberta's wild species and spaces through indoor activities and outdoor exploration all throughout the year. To date, we have distributed over 190 printed *Nature Heroes* books and 750 bookmarks (promoting the free digital version), with 103 unique digital users of the free digital version. The book was distributed to all the children who attended the Family Nature Nights in Red Deer and Calgary, where one of the activities was demonstrated to start them on their journey to becoming a Nature Hero.

Nature Alberta attended the 2023 Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention, handing out free classroom resources including 96 copies of *The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Alberta: A Second Look*, Nature Alberta totes, bookmarks promoting our website and digital magazine, plus 60 free samples of the print *Nature Alberta Magazine*. As a result, 184 teachers subscribed to Nature Alberta's e-newsletter, providing free resources to over 3,500 students to increase local nature knowledge.

Nature Alberta led and participated in a variety of popular in-person programs, including Christmas

Bird Counts for Kids, Snow Goose Festival, World Migratory Bird Day Festival, Tree Planting for Biodiversity, six Family Nature Nights, and an array of nature walks, presentations, and information booths. Our inaugural in-person Winter Bug Count was hosted at the Edmonton Valley Zoo, with John and Benny Acorn leading groups of 35 volunteers to document 14 species of bugs living both indoors and outdoors in February. 2023 will forever be remembered as the year the Snow Goose Festival was revived. With reserve funds available from the Town of Tofield, Nature Alberta was able to engage over 200 newcomers to

17
Events

1,942
Participants

36
Community
Partners

5 Cities



Canada and at-risk youth in a guided nature walk, nature crafts, and countryside tour to look for flocks of migrating snow geese. Hundreds of participants at both the Snow Goose Festival and Migratory Bird Day Festival contributed to our Bird Friendly community art project, which now hangs at the Nature Alberta office in the Percy Page Centre to inspire staff and naturalists for many years to come. Through two of our events, participants planted 350 trees of 13 native species to restore wildlife habitat in Edmonton urban parks. Our popular Family Nature Nights series were hosted in Red Deer, Calgary, Edmonton, and St. Albert. We had an impressive turnout with 788 participants, in the rain, smoke, and sunshine filled skies, at six events with the following themes:







When asked about their absolute favourite part of the Family Nature Night event, anonymous participants responded:

"Our guide Amy was absolutely wonderful! And my boys (8 and 6) LOVED digging through the owl vomit for mouse bones!"

— Birds and Bugs Family Nature Night Parent Attendee



"Kids get to know more about nature and I saw them start asking questions and the volunteers are happy to explain it to them."

— Guardians of Nature Family Nature Night Parent Attendee

"I would like to commend Nature Alberta for the successful 2023 Snow Goose Festival! Thank you for your efficiency and hard work in coordinating everything: busing, volunteers and volunteer orientation, events, food, communication, etc. We are grateful to continue in partnership with Nature Alberta in the annual Snow Goose Festival. These trips make a significant impact in the experiences of the newcomer families as they learn more about Alberta's rich nature. We thank your wonderful volunteers, Josh and Brig, for sharing their knowledge and expertise and for making it fun and enjoyable for the families. We also would like to thank the bus driver, Niep, who was very kind and accommodating, as the scheduled time was not on our side. The kids in the groups were happy and the families expressed interest in participating in similar events. This is one of our goals in this trip: that it inspires newcomer families to appreciate spending more time learning and protecting nature, and just simply enjoying the outdoors. We look forward to connecting more with you."

— Gemalil Bonaobra, Edmonton Immigrant Services Association at Snow Goose Festival





Alberta Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy

Alberta Fish and Wildlife

Alberta Lake Management Society

Alberta Science Network

Beaverhill Bird Observatory

Big Lake Environment Support Society

Boys and Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton

Buffalo Lake Naturalists

Catholic Social Services

City of Edmonton Pest Management Lab

Cold Lake Fish Hatchery

Community Natural Foods

Edmonton Immigrant

Services Association

Edmonton Valley Zoo

Entomological Society of Alberta

Fairplay Pet Supply/Wildbird Centre

Indigenous Sport Council of Alberta

Inglewood Migratory Bird Sanctuary

John Janzen Nature Centre

MacEwan University

Nature Calgary

Nature Central

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance

Northern Forestry Centre

Red Deer River Naturalists Red Deer River Watershed

Alliance

Root for Trees

Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery

Telus

Town of Tofield

University of Alberta Future

Energy Systems

Wagner Natural Area Society

Waskasoo Environmental Education Society

Weaselhead Glenmore Park Preservation Society

Wildbird General Store

Wild Bird Unlimited, Edmonton









Online Outreach

communications@naturealberta.ca

Nature Alberta's mission is to be "a strong voice and an active champion for the greater appreciation and conservation of Alberta's natural environment." We advance this mission through a public outreach program that celebrates our natural heritage, educates Albertans about native species and ecosystems, and raises awareness of conservation issues. These are the building blocks of public caring and engagement, which ultimately drive environmental policy.

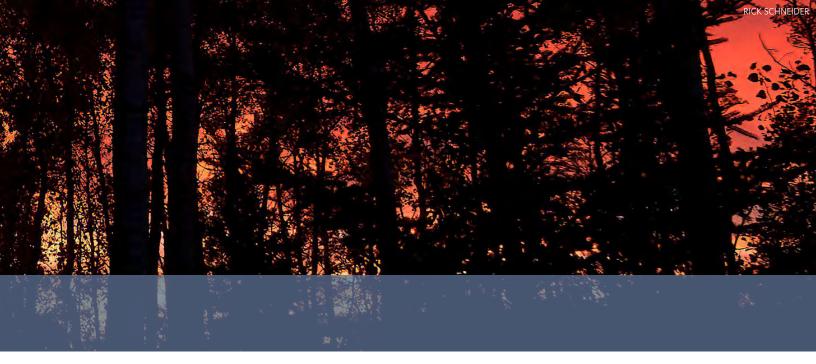
The flagship of our outreach program is *Nature Alberta Magazine*, available in print form by subscription and in digital form on our website (at no charge). The magazine is a high-quality, full-colour publication providing informative and engaging articles on all aspects of nature in Alberta. Over the past year we have published natural history articles on a wide variety of species (from butterflies to bats), provided in-depth analysis of important conservation issues, taken readers into the field with research scientists, shared images and stories from leading wildlife photographers, and much more. There is also a Nature Kids section in every issue. The feature articles are written by field biologists, university researchers, and expert naturalists keen to share their knowledge and their passion for nature.



Magazine readership continues to grow, and is now over 2,100 readers per issue. We have also been selling the magazine, on a cost-recovery basis, at four stores (in Edmonton, Calgary, and Spruce Grove). This year we continued our efforts to build public library subscriptions (currently 33) and we undertook outreach efforts to bring the magazine to the attention of teachers in the Edmonton region.

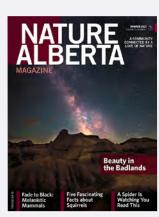
We also reach the public through several social media platforms and an electronic newsletter. We use these platforms for shorter, more frequent posts on nature-related events and presentations hosted by Nature Alberta, our member clubs, and other nature organizations. This is also where we post news about pressing conservation issues, including calls for public action. We now have over 10,000 followers on Facebook, as well as 2,800 on Instagram. Over the past year, our E-news subscriptions increased by 21%, from 3,132 to 3,792.

The final pillar of our online outreach program is our website, which is organized around three main themes: Learn About Nature, Experience Nature, and Protect Nature. Much of the content is derived from the magazine and our social media posts; therefore, repeat visitors always find something new. The site also provides kid-friendly nature activities











Nature Alberta Magazine online

and opportunities for experiencing nature, protecting urban nature, citizen science, local nature clubs, and much more. A major addition this year was the creation of an extensive Explore Alberta section, which provides information on Alberta's natural history and how people can access it. We also added a new section on conservation priorities and expanded the citizen science section. Over the past year, the website was visited by approximately 16,000 people per month.

Magazine Content Contributors in 2023

Benny Acorn	Hira Shah	Kenton Neufeld	Megan Evans
Cheryl Tebby	Jaime Pinzon	Kevin Timoney	Nick Carter
Cory Olson	James Glasier	Lara Fitzpatrick	Sara Lorenz
Danika Schramm	Jessica Reilly	Lise Mayne	Sheldon Frissell
Erin McCloskey	Jessica Haines	Lorna Allen	Trevor Floreani
Forrest Hisey	Jim Brohman	Lorne Fitch	
Gillian Chow-Fraser	Jonah Olsen	Margot Hervieux	
Greg Pohl	Karin Lindquist	Mark Bradley	



Nature Alberta owes much of its success to the unwavering dedication and contributions of 128 active volunteers who contributed 2,804 hours. This is the equivalent of an additional one full-time and one half-time staff member! But volunteers empower us beyond these numbers — we often have over ten volunteers contributing at Nature Kids events, registering 200 guests, leading them around the event, and delivering high-quality nature programming to connect youth and their families to nature. Nature Alberta Volunteers compile and lead citizen science events including the May Species Count and Alberta Biodiversity Challenge, participate in the Christmas Bird Count for Kids and Winter Bug Count, and survey Important Bird Areas. Nature Alberta volunteers include researchers, biologists, and expert naturalists who write content for *Nature Alberta Magazine* and contribute to the newly updated *Nature Heroes* book. Volunteers even raised funds to support our important work through guided nature walks and the Birding for Nature campaign. Our Executive Director, Richard Schneider, volunteers his time alongside the Board of Directors to steer the organization towards strategic growth and sustainable funding to set up Nature Alberta for success far into the future.

Nature Alberta's Volunteer Team receives highlights of upcoming opportunities directly to their inbox through the monthly Volunteer Dispatch. Volunteers can also view opportunities to contribute to Nature Alberta's initiatives as well as Nature Network opportunities all across the province through our Volunteer & Job Board. During the past year there have been over 65 volunteer opportunities listed on our Volunteer & Job Board, connecting interested, skilled individuals to various openings including conservation, stewardship, citizen science, and Nature Kids opportunities across the province.

We track and summarize these generous contributions by maintaining a Volunteer Database. In 2023, the Family Nature Nights Volunteer Manual was updated to enhance training of Nature Kids event volunteers. Volunteer onboarding sessions via Zoom were also held prior to Family Nature Nights and the Snow Goose Festival. Nature Alberta's amazing volunteers were appreciated through many thanks, small gifts, social media posts and a special Volunteer Appreciation and Nature Walk event that took place in September.

"I had a lot of fun, and I'm glad I had the opportunity to participate. I think this event is a really excellent way to get families out and learn about what we have going on around us."

— Amy Charles, Nature Alberta Volunteer

"I had a wonderful experience volunteering at the Nature Heroes Family Nature Night, and I'm looking forward to volunteering with Nature Alberta more in the future."

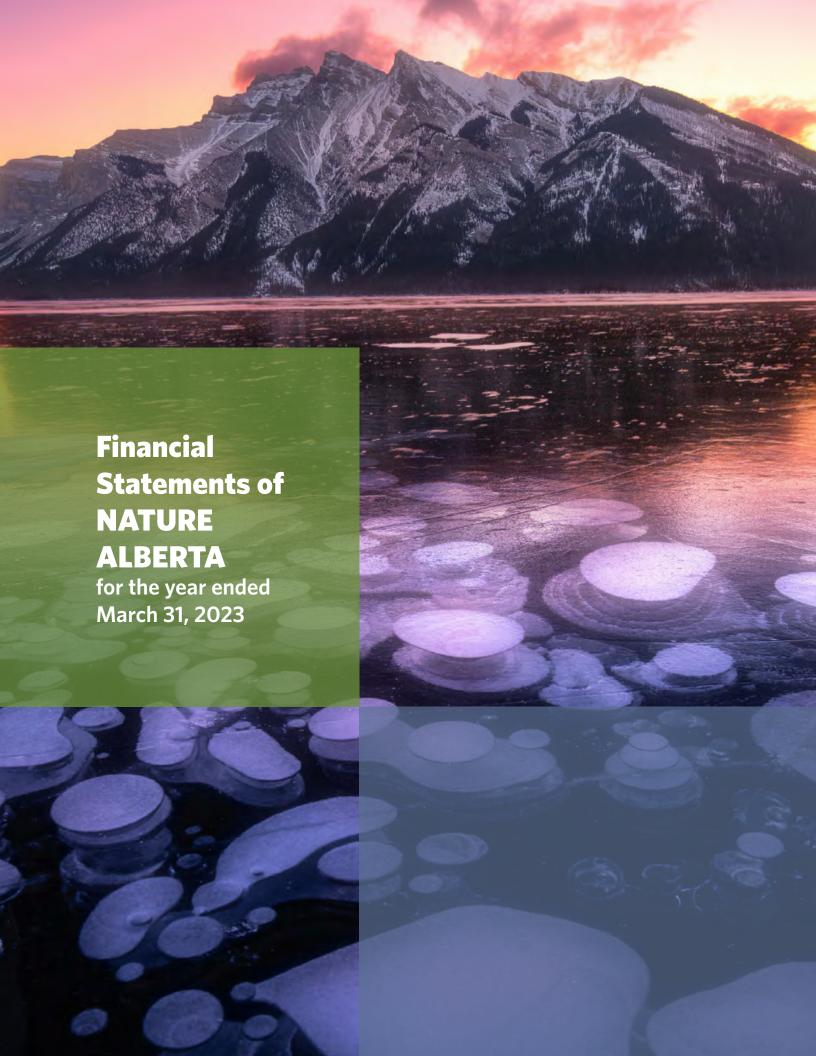
— Amanda Dickson, Family Nature Night Volunteer



128
Volunteers







Statement of Financial Position As at March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash and short-term investments	248,143	201,757
Accounts receivable	6,199	9,681
Inventory	14,797	16,882
Prepaid expenses	11,233	817
	280,372	229,137
EQUIPMENT	3,336	2,347
	283,708	231,484
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	18,150	21,137
Deferred contributions (including casino)	81,427	15,841
	99,577	36,978
NET ASSETS		
Invested in equipment	3,336	2,347
Unrestricted	180,795	192,159
	184,131	194,506
	\$283,708	\$231,484

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year ended March 31, 2023

	Invested in equipment	Unrestricted	2023 \$	2022 \$
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	2,347	192,159	194,506	200,652
Purchase of equipment	1,825	(1,825)	-	-
Revenue over (under) expenses	(836)	(9,539)	(10,375)	(6,146)
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	3,336	180,795	184,131	194,506

Statement of Operations

Year ended March 31. 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
REVENUE		
Grants	91,971	95,358
Donations	48,772	55,849
Casino funds	26,065	30,738
Memberships and club insurance fees	19,445	17,792
Bookstore	15,714	14,853
Fees for club services and other	8,927	30,523
Interest income	2,681	2,237
	213,575	247,350
EXPENSES		
Employee wages and benefits	86,084	94,899
Endowment contribution	41,429	61,250
Contracted services	30,241	34,483
Advertising and promotion	20,224	13,671
Insurance	15,983	12,773
Program costs	10,410	11,471
Professional fees	8,149	12,635
Office	7,331	8,639
Bank charges	1,375	1,498
Travel	1,361	943
Other	1,363	1,234
	223,950	253,496
REVENUE UNDER EXPENSES	-10,375	-6,146

