



FRIENDS OF THE
HELENSCHULER
NATURE CENTRE SOCIETY

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



**"We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors,
we borrow it from our children"**

- Proverb





THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND!

"One of the annual programs that I always look forward to is the "Inspired by Nature: Youth Art Exhibition" that we co-sponsored again this year with the Rotary Club of Lethbridge East. It is always exciting for me to see our natural world interpreted through the eyes of our young and very talented artists. Year in and year out, their creativity never ceases to amaze."

Rick Andrews
President

"Memberships are a great way to sustain our Society. With an active membership you receive our newsletters as well as voting privileges at our Annual General Meeting. Thank you to all current Friends!"

Kristen Aspden
Treasurer

"As we move into the tenth year of our Society it is amazing to look back and see all that we have accomplished, and the past year is no exception. Our Travel Adventures series returned with an exciting slate of speakers and a successful implementation of a hybrid format, allowing both in-person and virtual participation. We broke ground on the outdoor information kiosk, which will provide a convenient and accessible source of information for river valley users even when the Nature Centre is closed. Perhaps most impactful to me was the Welcome to Canada program for new Canadians. Seeing first-hand the joy felt by the families as they experienced their first Canadian winter made me proud to be part of a community that supports and values our natural spaces. I look forward to seeing what we accomplish in the next ten years."

Taylor Hecker
Secretary & HSNC Representative

"The Friends of Society is important for so many reasons. From raising money for capital improvements, like the Co-op Community Outdoor Classroom, to hosting events like Travel Adventures. Our Society supports a variety of programs that help educate people about the environment. We serve a broad audience - from ages 2 to senior - including new Canadians. With a Friends membership you can help support all these programs and so much more."

Deb Kellett
Director

"I believe that the most significant program devised and enacted by our Society is the outreach to support new immigrants to Canada. This program was first offered in November 2022 but is designed to be ongoing. Such efforts make me very proud to be associated with the Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society."

John M. Usher
Director

"The Helen Schuler Nature Centre is a pillar in the Southern Alberta community. Whether you are engaging within the space as a new resident, or you've grown up within the space, there is something for everyone, and for all ages! I was able to engage with the Centre throughout my time as a student at the University of Lethbridge, and have been lucky to share this with my friends and family. If you are interested in getting involved, I hope you purchase a membership to help us support conservation efforts in Lethbridge. I encourage you to consider getting involved with the Friends Board of Directors! This is truly a great place to volunteer and we'd love to have you!"

Kairvee Bhatt
Director

OUR FOCUS

ADVANCING NATURE APPRECIATION IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA!

Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society supports a community of environmentally-responsible citizens with interactive, nature-based educational experiences.

Our Society builds appreciation and connection with nature by:

- Supporting environmental education programs and special projects;
- Enhancing the resources of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre;
- Fostering the importance of nature!

Our Society advances education by providing workshops and presentations about the local natural environment to the public.

We are proud to partner with a network of nature and environment focused organizations to offer and support nature-based programming in our community.

We are always seeking grant and partnership opportunities for our programs, projects, and initiatives for nature-based education in Lethbridge.

In many ways our efforts make the Nature Centre better! However, our Society does not offset the capital and operational requirements of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre. We provide enhancements for the benefit of the community that would not otherwise be available.



IMPACT IN 2022

1

NEW PUBLICATION:
CHECKLIST OF BIRDS OF THE LETHBRIDGE AREA

1

NEW INFORMATION KIOSK CONSTRUCTED

79

ACTIVE FRIENDS MEMBERS

411

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE OBSERVATIONS

1,432

PROGRAM ATTENDEES & PARTICIPANTS

5,022

UNIQUE WEBSITE VISITORS

\$9,300

TOTAL DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM INDIVIDUALS

\$53,742

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED IN 2022

See our full financial report, available at
NatureCentre.ca/2022



WHAT YOUR SUPPORT MAKES POSSIBLE

Since 2014 our Society has delivered 126 programs directly to the community, benefitting over 13,000 attendees and participants. In that time, we also helped realize two large capital improvement projects, produced several publications, and advocated for the importance of Nature Centres in Alberta. Our work provides lasting benefit, enriching the experience for 58,000+ annual visitors to the Helen Schuler Nature Centre.

Inspiring Nature Appreciation

Spending time outside is an important part of growing up! We support environmental programs like 'Coulee Cleanup' and 'Natural Leaders Project' that help families and groups spend more time outside together. In partnership with the Rotary Club of Lethbridge East we also sponsor the 'Inspired by Nature: Youth Art Exhibition' showcasing the next generation of artists.

Improving the Experience

We help to offer a world-class experience at the Nature Centre! We have published free printed resources, including 'Checklist of the Birds of the Lethbridge Area' and 'Lethbridge Through the Seasons'. We also lead major capital improvement projects like the newly constructed Information Kiosk or the Co-op Community Outdoor Classroom.

Investing in the Future

Our Endowment Fund continues to grow each year, generating a stable source of revenue that provides long-term support for nature-based interpretive programming in Lethbridge. This allows us to support programs like 'Welcome to Canada' for new Canadians, which helps to foster a community of environmentally-aware and responsible citizens.



NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the past year, our efforts have resulted in significant support of nature-based programs, capital enhancements at the Nature Centre, and awareness of our role in the community.

Throughout the year, we had a constant presence in the Nature Centre with our video *Snake Safety in Lethbridge, Alberta with Ken Moore* as part of the *Snakes Alive* exhibition. We estimate that the video played over 800 times during the exhibition and was enjoyed by approximately 20,000 visitors who watched all or part of the presentation. The video is available on YouTube and will continue to provide practical snake safety tips for many years.

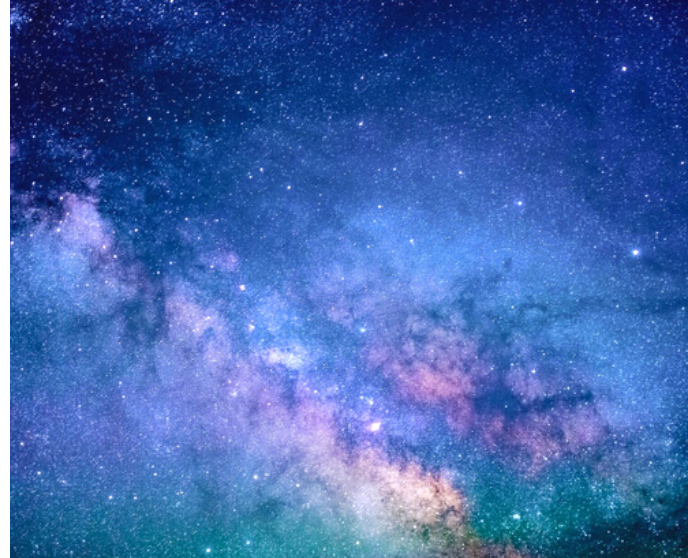
In January, we helped to raise awareness about the importance of developing a Light Nuisance Bylaw for Lethbridge. Our advocacy encouraged City Council to consider simple steps we can all take to reduce our impact on the local environment. We continue to encourage our community to use light fixtures that are shielded, so they direct light only where it is needed, and to only use outdoor lighting when necessary.

In March, we were proud to partner with the Lethbridge Naturalists' Society and the Helen Schuler Nature Centre to release the second-edition of the Checklist of the Birds of the Lethbridge Area. Thanks to a generous donation from our Friends we printed 1,000 copies of the Bird Checklists. Copies were distributed throughout the community with additional copies available at the Nature Centre as part of their brochure collection.

We hosted our second virtual Annual General Meeting in March. Our membership with Nature Alberta provides access to a Zoom account, which proved helpful in hosting all of our online events throughout 2022.

Also in March, we hosted a Nest Box Building Workshop with Prairie Birds Nest Boxes at the Helen Schuler Nature Centre. This was a great opportunity to learn how to attract birds to your backyard. Participants built their own cedar nest box. Participants learned what makes good nesting habitat and how to attract native species.

Starting in April we sponsored River Valley Conservation Projects, including: Coulee Cleanup, Shoreline Cleanup, and Invasive Weed Pulls. We co-hosted Shoreline Saturday events on the first Saturday of each month and Weedy Wednesday events on the





third Wednesday of each month throughout the summer. The conservation projects took place from May thru September; 1,040 volunteers participated, helping to remove 328 bags of garbage from natural areas around Lethbridge.

During the first weekend of May, we co-hosted the City Nature Challenge with the Helen Schuler Nature Centre. This was the second time that Lethbridge took part in this global bioblitz. While participation was slightly down from the previous year, we could not be happier to share Lethbridge's results:

- 411 observations were made; 170 species were observed;
- 27 observers took part; 118 identifiers assisted;
- 83% of observations were research grade;
- Most Observations & Most Species reported by: Ted Nanninga.

As part of the Challenge we supported the Nature Centre's temporary outdoor signage program. Working with wildlife biologist Jason Headley, signs about iNaturalist were developed and deployed along park trails. QR Codes on the signs were linked with our website, providing photos, videos, and audio files that supported the program. We provided similar support for another Nature Centre program, 'Wentzscope Seed Walk' that took place in August.

In June we were excited to see the return of Nature Play Day – one of the Nature Centre's premiere annual events. Our Society was happy to assist with marketing efforts and recruiting volunteers to assist with the event.

Starting in September, in partnership with Rotary Club of Lethbridge East, we sponsored the *Inspired by Nature: Youth Art Exhibition* in the Community Art Gallery at the Nature Centre. This annual showcase of creative expressions from youth under the age of 18 highlighted the next generation of artists. Since 2015, we have featured 227 youth artists with this program. This has expanded opportunities in Lethbridge for emerging artists to develop their craft and understand the process of participating in exhibitions. Rotary confirmed their continued support into 2023!

Also in September, we saw the Travel Adventures series return. After a two-year COVID hiatus, we were excited to return with an amazing lineup showcasing the plants, animals, and people of amazing worldly destinations. We thank all of our guest speakers – Joanna Fraser (Patagonia), John & Gayle Krampfl (Wildlife Lethbridge), Wanda Gibbons (Big 5 of South Africa), and Chris Fisher (Birds: Our Prescription for Happiness). The presentations were offered to a limited in-person audience as well as an online audience (thanks to Nature Alberta for their Zoom account). In total there were 187 people in attendance and the programs raised over \$1,800 in support of the Nature Centre!



In September we supported the Lethbridge Public Library's annual literary festival *Word on the Street*. In partnership with the Southern Alberta Group for the Environment we supported the presentation of Maude Barlow, an engaging activist and best-selling author of 20 books. In her newest book *Still Hopeful*, Barlow counters the prevailing atmosphere of pessimism that surrounds us and offers lessons of hope that she has learned from a lifetime of activism.

In October our Board of Directors approved funding towards a program designed for new Canadians. The *Welcome to Canada* program will support recent immigrants to connect with Lethbridge's amazing natural spaces. We seek to foster a sense of belonging, as well as comfort, and familiarity in spending time outside. We anticipate this program will be offered regularly in conjunction with Lethbridge Family Services Immigration Department.

In November we wrote a letter of support for the LINK Pathway. We also provided nominal funding support, as the project will help visitors of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre in Lethbridge and the Alberta Birds of Prey Centre in Coaldale to be able to walk, run, bike, or rollerblade between these two premier nature-based attractions. It will also support people in spending more time outside!

In December we were proud to announce two amazing contributions towards nature play in Lethbridge! We received a \$5,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta. We also received a \$500 grant from The Georgina Foundation. Both grants will support our Nature Play Space Kiosk project that will start in 2023.

Thanks to our Friends for helping us to achieve so much!

Photo Captions

- Cover - Nature Centre staff lead a Family Field Trip in Nature Reserve Park
- Page 2 - Family enjoying binoculars during the 'Welcome to Canada' program
- Page 3 - Travel Adventures introduction by John Usher at Helen Schuler Nature Centre
- Page 4 - Nature Centre volunteer workshop at Elizabeth Hall Wetlands
- Page 5 - (Top) Yellow Bells photo by Becky Cousins
(Middle) Long Tailed Weasel photo by John Krampfl
(Bottom) Snowy Owl photo by Al Daiken
- Page 6 - Junior Naturalists program exploring Coulee Climb self-guided trail
- Page 7 - (Top) Screengrab of Ken Moore leading Snake Safety presentation
(Middle) Image of night sky by Unsplash
(Bottom) Prairie Nest Box Workshop
- Page 8 - (Top) Coulee Cleanup participants posing with their bags
(Middle) City Nature Challenge Lethbridge photo by Jason Headley
(Bottom) Inspired by Nature artists next to their art on display
- Page 9 - (Top) Chris Fisher presents at Travel Adventures presentation
(Middle) Rotary Club of Lethbridge East supports Inspired by Nature
(Bottom) New Information Kiosk under construction at the Nature Centre
- Page 10 - Inaugural Board of Directors photographed in Fall 2012
- Page 12 - Lethbridge Nature Reserve Park photo by Al Daiken



Summary of Activities

Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society is active year-round - delivering programs, grant-writing and fundraising, engaging in advocacy, and building our capacity.

Travel Adventures Presentations

- *Patagonia* with Joanna Fraser (23-Oct-22)
- *Wildlife Lethbridge* with John Krampf (28-Oct-22)
- *The Big 5 of South Africa* with Wanda Gibbons (25-Nov-22)
- *Birds: Our Prescription for Happiness* with Chris Fisher (02-Dec-22)

Conservation Initiatives

- Coulee Cleanup – Sponsorship (21-Apr-22 thru 31-May-22)
- Shoreline Cleanup – Shoreline Saturdays – Sponsorship (May 7, June 4, July 2, August 6, September 3)
- Invasive Weed Pull – Weedy Wednesdays – Sponsorship (May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17)

Snake Safety Presentations

- *Snake Safety in Lethbridge, Alberta* with Ken Moore - video on display as part of the Snakes Alive Exhibition (19-Dec-21 thru 19-Nov-22)

Community Events, Outreach, Programs, & Workshops

- Light Nuisance Bylaw Advocacy to City Council (13-Jan-22)
- *Checklist of the Birds of the Lethbridge Area* with Lethbridge Naturalists' Society (16-Mar-22)
- *Nest Box Building Workshop with Prairie Bird Nest Boxes* at Helen Schuler Nature Centre (19-Mar-22)
- *City Nature Challenge* – Community-wide Citizen Science BioBlitz (29-Apr-22 thru 02-May-22)
- *Nature Play Day* – Event Sponsorship (11-Jun-22)
- *Natural Leaders Project* – Guided River Trip (21-Jul-22)
- *Word on the Street* – Maude Barlow, *Still Hopeful* – Author Presentation Sponsorship (17-Sep-22)
- *Inspired by Nature: Youth Art Exhibition* – Program Sponsorship (19-Sept-22 thru 30-Oct-22)
- *Inspired by Nature: Youth Art Exhibition* – Galley Closing Event (30-Oct-22)
- *Welcome to Canada* with Lethbridge Family Services Immigration Department – (14-Nov-22)
- LINK Pathway Letter of Support and Sponsorship (28-Nov-22)
- City of Lethbridge Native Cottonwood Project Letter of Support for Tree Canada grant (30-Nov-22)

Governance

- Annual General Meeting (13-Mar-22)
- Executive Meeting (08-Apr-22)
- Executive Meeting (12-Jul-22)
- Executive Meeting (12-Oct-22)

Learn about our upcoming programs and events online at [NatureCentre.ca/events](https://www.naturecentre.ca/events)

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

Our organization was incorporated as a society on December 31, 2012. Nearly five years later we became a registered charity.

We have accomplished so much over the past 10 years thanks to the support of our Friends!

To celebrate our first 10 years we ask you to consider making a tax-deductible donation towards our Endowment Fund.

Your generosity will help make the Nature Centre an even better resource for our community.

Your support towards the Endowment Fund today will benefit the Nature Centre in perpetuity – helping us help even more people and make a bigger impact!

Thank you for your ongoing support; we wish you a wonderful 2023 ahead!



Thank you to our founding board of directors (left-to-right): David Sarsfield, Ken Moore, Becky Little, Rick Parker, Coreen Putman, as well as those not pictured, David Dorrell and Linda Cerney.

THANK YOU!

Join us in our mission to connect people to the benefits of the great outdoors!

Get involved:

- Become a Friends Member
- Make a donation
- Volunteer with us
- Consider joining our Board of Directors
- Attend a program, event, or workshop
- Visit the Nature Centre
- Share a testimonial about the Nature Centre
- Spend more time outside
- Encourage your friends and family to join you



FRIENDS OF THE
HELENSCHULER
NATURE CENTRE SOCIETY



SUPPORT • ENHANCE • FOSTER

Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society

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