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### REMINDER

Our address has changed.

New address below.

20-194001 160 Street W

Foothills AB T1S 4K9

## Celebrating 30 Years of Conservation!



In 1987, Ann and Sandy Cross made the decision to donate their land for conservation and education. At the time, it was the largest private land donation in Canadian history. Combined with 2800 acres they donated in 1996, the ASCCA now consists of 4800 acres of beautiful wildlife habitat.



As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we would like to thank Ann and Sandy, as well as all of our volunteers, staff, donors and supporters over the years for allowing us to continue to protect this piece of paradise. Without you, none of what we do would be possible.



Mike Sturk





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Paul Turbitt



Mike Sturk



Mike Sturk





## Canada 150 Legacy Tree Planting

Looking back on our Canada 150 Legacy Tree Planting event with Calgary YMCA LINC.

Our July Canada 150 Legacy Tree Planting event started in February. We'd just submitted our application to the Community Fund for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> with an idea to invite new Canadians still putting down roots to plant a legacy forest, connecting them to their home. I often feel that the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area is comparable to a tree. A tree that connects, grows and changes.

Several months before this event was conceptualized, I planted my first tree in the area. I'll never forget that experience, and the realization of what I had become a part of. Since then I've been lucky enough to be involved with several plantings. Tree planting is part of our conservation work, leaving behind an impact that is larger than ourselves.

A young tree is like a growing child, holding immeasurable potential. With the trees we plant we seed our hopes and dreams. We dream of the right now, a time for action and a time for reaching out, to cross boundaries.

In March, our application for funding was accepted. We had become part of a larger national dialogue spurred by community foundations across Canada, to share our stories and celebrate our Canada. Within it we discover the simple joy of being outdoors, a zest for life, of relishing in the beauty of nature and feeling a strong desire to protect it, preserve it, and share it with the ones we love.

On July 8, 2017, more than 100 new Canadians and their families came to plant trees in the area, in partnership

with Calgary YMCA LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada). I'll never forget how their faces lit up, holding the trees they were about to plant. We all took time digging holes, packing down dirt and getting our hands dirty. It was lovingly that we carried buckets for watering the trees, taking proud photos and smiling at the thought of coming back to see how they would grow.

LINC coordinator Daniel Stark expressed that "students who are new to the country do not feel connected and events like this help their sense of community," connecting them to nature. We hope to continue to provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience nature and learn the value of conservation.

**Anna Aldridge**

403.931.1042

[info@crossconservation.org](mailto:info@crossconservation.org)



*This initiative was made possible by the Community Fund for Canada's 150th, a collaboration between Calgary Foundation, the Government of Canada, and extraordinary leaders from coast to coast to coast.*



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DU CANADA

Canada



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## Day Camps at the Cross Conservation Area

Reflections from ASCCA day camp volunteer Rachel Kubitz

I can't remember when the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area (ASCCA) was not a part of my summer adventures. For a little girl who did not enjoy her mother putting her in day camps, I quickly changed my attitude about going to camp when I stepped through these doors. Out of all the camps I had gone to as a child, this was the only one I couldn't stop going back to summer after summer, even to this day.

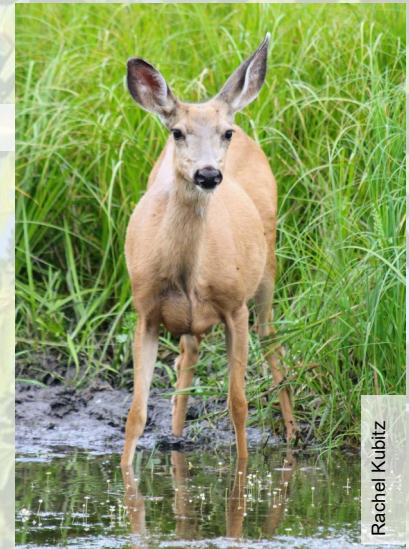
From an early age I was intrigued with nature and inspired to protect what precious wildlife we have. At camp I learned about different living organisms, how to build a shelter, and how to handle various survival situations, work with others and think creatively. Summers at the ASCCA have shaped my character and how I value the preservation of our environment.

As I am growing up, I carry the things I learned at camp into real life situations. With increasing environmental problems such as climate change, pollution and resource depletion, I believe it is critical to teach future generations how to care for our environment before it's too late.

As a day camp volunteer, I now help inspire volunteer opportunities for campers who are passionate about conserving our environment and working with younger kids at day camps. I want to help them understand their responsibility in protecting nature while they have a fun summer experience. It's these young minds who will have the responsibility of coming up with new solutions to growing global issues.

Ann & Sandy Cross were two people who donated their land with a vision of educating those who visited the area about the conservation of our Earth. Thanks to their generous donation, I and many others have been given a new perspective and have been enlightened about the importance of conservation.

I remember how my camp leaders mentored me throughout my camp experience. These camp leaders have had an impression on me and have inspired me to be a leader myself. The greatest part of volunteering at summer day camps is watching how the kids can grow and develop in just a week.



At first they are shy, just like I was as a camper, but by the end of the week they've met new friends and are singing songs at the top of their lungs on the trails. I love telling stories to young minds and watching their eyes grow wider with interest and watching the smiles that camp can bring to the kids.

As a volunteer, I am so proud that I can contribute to the place that helped shape me by mentoring and inspiring future generations. Looking back I can only be thankful that I have had the opportunity to be a part of this organization. The Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area is without a doubt a hidden gem where memories are made.



A throwback photo of Michael, Rachel and Shaylene, three of our day camp volunteers.

**The ASCCA Nature Safari Day Camp is looking for sponsorship. From afternoon snacks and craft materials to advertisement, guest speakers and salaries, there is a lot that goes into keeping day camps alive at the ASCCA. If you or someone you know may be interested in sponsoring these valuable programs please contact Laura at [lgriffin@crossconservation.org](mailto:lgriffin@crossconservation.org) or 403-931-2042. We also accept material donations such as arts and crafts supplies, camping equipment and compasses. Help us give kids a place to become stewards and support day camps at the ASCCA!**

*In 2017 our day camp volunteers contributed over **327** hours!*  
**YOU'RE AWESOME!**





A new platform that was built for CreekWatch volunteers to collect water samples (above). A turbidity sensor, a dissolved oxygen probe and a flow-rate sensor (below).



## ASCCA Volunteer Update

I hope you've all had a beautiful summer with friends and family celebrating Canada's 150th, have enjoyed the colours of fall and are looking forward to the picturesque views of winter. It's been a busy few months. We've recruited several new volunteers, many of whom are area stewards who are already enjoying their walks as ambassadors to the ASCCA. Thank you to all of our volunteers. Reflecting on the impact our volunteers have made over the ASCCA's 30 year history energizes and inspires me.

This year, we received funding from the Land Stewardship Centre's Watershed Stewardship Grant Program for our CreekWatch water testing program of Pine Creek. We were able to build a new platform for collecting water from the creek, and purchased new digital equipment for more accurate readings. We plan to continue CreekWatch with volunteers in the spring, so stay tuned! Thank you to Bev Lane, Chris and Peggy Mills, Duncan Shipley, Heide Blakely, Lesley MacDonald and Marj Fraser for keeping up this program.

We will be holding our annual Volunteer Recruitment Session in March and Area Steward Training in April. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact me at **403.931.1042** or email **info@crossconservation.org**. There are plenty of ways to get involved in being a part of Ann and Sandy's conservation legacy.

**Anna Aldridge**, Communications and Volunteer Coordinator.

## 2016 Volunteer Award, Martha Clarke and Pierre Tremblay

Our 2016 Volunteer Award went to Martha Clarke and Pierre Tremblay, who have demonstrated their passion for conservation and the outdoors as volunteers since 2010. We asked them to share what has shaped their experience volunteering at the ASCCA.

**THE PEOPLE**, who have shared their love of the land and their knowledge of it with us.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

- During an area steward walk in the Fall hearing the elk bugling - a haunting sound
- Almost walking into an elk herd during a walk and having them jump over each other in their effort to get away from us
- Coming out of the washroom at Belvedere House and coming face to face with a fox with a gopher in its mouth

- Watching the gathering of ungulates during a cold foggy day in a narrow clear band of land above the Pine Creek trail
- Finding an occupied bear den
- Seeing the animal tracks in the snow in the winter months and realizing how much area the various animals cover

### THE LEARNING

- About wildflowers, animals and birds
- About invasive species and their effect on the land
- From other people's experiences - the staff, the public and other volunteers
- About ranch maintenance methods
- About the challenges of conservation within an urban setting

We have appreciated having the opportunity to participate in many different projects around the conversation area. We hope to continue to volunteer for many years to come.

Martha and Pierre



Dick Choy



## Ann's Garden at the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area

**The wall of sandstone.** Some time ago our land was a beach of the ancient ocean. Eventually these sandy plains dried, hardened, uplifted and the Porcupine Hills rose as the last rise of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Today, ground beetles and red ants find a home in the deep crevasses of these stones that man stacked into a wall. A garter snake may slither through the forest of plant stems these stones hold in place.

**Red-osier dogwood.** Deep red canes bring colour into our green and tawny landscape in winter, inviting deer to browse the young twigs where space is open and non-threatening. In spring, new green leaves emerge and soon white flower clusters grace their branches for a long blooming season. Cooler days in September bring forth the deep burgundy leaves with silvery undersides, competing for show with the white berries. They are quite sour and can be toxic in large quantities.

**Gooseberry.** A spiny shrub with maple-like leaves that turn russet orange in fall. Their small berries are yellow, russet or black and juicy – yes, they taste like gooseberries from our gardens.



*Ann's Garden today.*

**Weeds.** Black medic, dandelion, thistles, grasses and other pioneer plants are equally eager to fill the spaces. These plants are determined to inhibit growth of flowers you'd rather like to see instead. Overgrown silverberries were removed a few years ago, but their root system and water sprouts are determined to stay. All are indeed built for eternal youth. Their calling to split rock and make soil has been perfected for eons. Choice applications for their demise are not really successful. Please share new ideas.

**And Now.** The intended looks of the garden and beyond have changed somewhat in the past 30 years, as studies of the seasons' impacts are revealing their forces. Buffaloberry branches are getting quite brittle and have been broken by heavy snow. Creeping juniper and saskatoon bush co-host the cedar apple rust fungus; these orange fruiting bodies sicken leaves and berries and become an eyesore. With one host gone, another piece of the uplifted beach will soon decorate that open space.

This is Ann's Garden. But there is a lot more to marvel at around Belvedere House: the soon-to-be good looking coulee, the prairie roses collection, the silverberries and the dogwoods, and yes, also the grasses ... just look closely. Their imagination of shape and colour and adaptation will amaze you.

You see, the generations of garden elves have always been busy to keep the unwanted at bay, so the beauty of the selected few can shine. We hope you enjoy visiting Ann's garden!

**Ursula Wiese**

Gardening Volunteer



*An early photo of Ann's Garden.*

**The native plants** collection atop the sandstone wall are samples of the varieties growing in their natural habitat on the land of Ann and Sandy Cross. The newcomers were seedlings just 30 years ago and were supplied by Bow Point Nursery, owners Pam and Ken Wright. Still some plants not found in this area got into the mix, like the native white and river birch, the European red leaf rose. Each plant offers a distinct character at any time in our seasons. Once in a while, when weather and temperatures play nice together, spring and autumn colours are breathtaking and berries are very juicy and supersized.

**Canada buffaloberry.** An almost perfect oval shrub, showing off when coppery buds cling to blackened branches in winter. In early spring, before the leaves emerge, the stamens of the tiny yellow male flowers are waiting for the winds to disperse their pollen. In summer, the new leaves turn dark, with a shiny surface; the female plants grow their berries, slowly ripening to a deep red. They have a soapy taste, were used in pemmican and bears savour them before hibernation.

**Potentilla.** A rugged character with strips of peeling bark and seemingly always in flower: yellow petals in summer and woody sepals for all of the remaining seasons glistening in the sun.

**Twining honeysuckle.** Emerald green leaves emerge in early spring on arching branches, become covered with yellow tubular blossoms for hummingbirds, later their red berries neatly nestled in a perfect leaf package.

**Beb's willow.** Slender branches expand over the void of the grove and shade the old rocks. These rocks found their way here through Reg's help placing them exactly where they were wanted – such great skills. Look for the new 'strawberry falls' – they are deep red this year!

**Perennials.** A display of flowers, seed heads, and distinctly shaped leaves and seed heads – anemone, delphinium, sticky purple geranium, beebalm, star-flowered solomon's seal ...



## In loving memory of Jen (Ross) Sherjan

### Jennifer - A Poem

She was born a Ross, ten fingers, ten toes  
 A gal of central Alberta, Camrose  
 She spoke often of the things she loved most  
 Her family most dear, and of her daddy she would boast.  
 Now horses were her passion especially the paints,  
 And puppies, of these her heart never grew faint  
 Things of nature she spoke of great length,  
 She always loved to lift up others, it was her greatest strength.  
 She came to the Cross I think the smartest of them all,  
 Learning came quickly, problems always eager to solve  
 People skills like none other, learned best from a great mother.  
 Times when she would grow weary, she needed her sister,  
 She would return, knowing how we missed her.  
 Her brothers she was so proud of working the land,  
 Roll up your sleeves folks let's give them a hand.  
 Her enthusiasm, laughter, great conversations and smile,  
 They will sustain us all, she leaves us feeling stronger  
 Jen left her mark with us, from staff to volunteers  
 Her memory will continue to inspire through the years.

**Reg Rempel** ASCCA Habitat Manager



*Reg took a picture of this fox in a barn at the ASCCA and feels that it was a sign that a part of Jen's spirit will always be present and watching over us.*

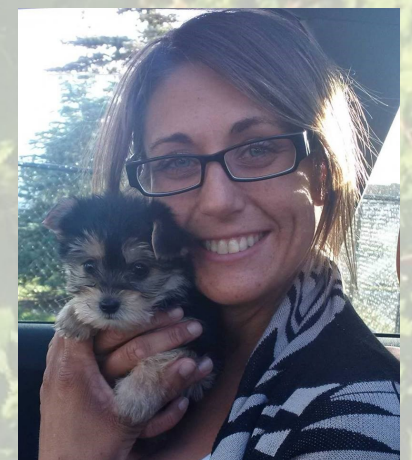


Jen (Ross) Sherjan



This year we were saddened with the loss of our dear friend and past employee Jen (Ross) Sherjan, who passed away on June 30th at 30 years of age. Jen had been involved for several years at the Cross, starting as a summer student and eventually taking the position of stakeholder communications coordinator. She will be remembered and honored for her bright spirit and passion for conservation and the outdoors.

Jen's family requested that memorial contributions be made to the ASCCA and the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation. We are humbled by their decision to honour Jen's memory in this way. Since her passing, several kind individuals have made donations to the ASCCA in memory of Jen. Jen had a passion for wetland conservation with a Master's degree in Resource and Environmental Management. We hope to dedicate a wetland restoration project in her name in the future. If you would like to make a contribution in memory of Jen please contact us at (403) 931-1042.






## Dear Humans, Love Bear

A letter from a bear who cares (translated from native bear into English by Zachary Mager, ASCCA summer student)

Hello Visitors, Volunteers and Employees of the Cross. I don't know how to pronounce my name with human words but it sounds a lot like **gggrarr**. I am a bear just in case you were wondering. Many people have asked if there are bears in the area. I would like to reply by saying that I spend half of my time at the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area. You might have seen my berry filled scat, or you might have been stupendously lucky to have seen me at a distance with my beautiful and shiny thick coat of fur (I like to express my modesty). The Cross however is not quite big enough for one bear, so I need to spend the other half of my time elsewhere. That is on a need to know basis and I hope you don't find my many bachelor pads.

As a bear, I find that I sometimes get bad press from the media. A BEAR TRASHES CAR FROM THE INSIDE. RAVENOUS BEAR EATS HUMAN GARBAGE. BEAR EATS FOOD FROM CAMPERS TENT. The truth is, I would never have entered that car if the guy didn't leave his double double and apple fritter donut in the passenger's side with the door open. Who does that anyway? With my superior sense of smell (a thousand times better than any old dog's nose), the scents wafting from your delectable leftovers in the trash bin are hard to ignore if I'm hungry. However, if available I much prefer my organic all-natural diet.

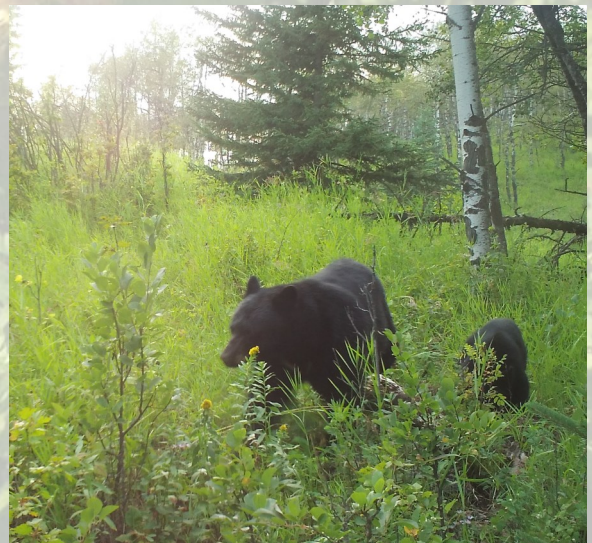
Whenever you are camping, do not leave any food near your camp ground. Please hang it out of my reach, otherwise I will likely get into trouble. I have little self-control when it comes to food lying about. I promise not to chase you if



**There is no need to be too nervous around me, if you treat me with respect.**

you don't run away from me. Humans are the funniest looking naked sweated apes I have ever seen. I would never mistake you for prey. However, when you run, my instinct takes over and I see food running on two legs. If you see me, talk to me calmly and slowly back away.

There is no need to be too nervous around me, if you treat me with respect and tell me how much the Oilers suck, or how much the Flames rock it will all be good. Sorry to Oiler fans, comes with the territory. If I am having a particularly grumpy bear day (as those days have been known to happen), avoid sneaking up on me, or getting between me and my cubs, or my food. In all seriousness, if we get too close to each other and I look aggressive, use the bear spray. Stay down wind, pull off the safety, then press down on the trigger when I am a car's length away. Aim the spray at the ground below my head and it will fly up into my face. This will get us both out of trouble. Bears are known to sometimes fake charge or bluff charge. If this is the case definitely use the bear spray, I deserve it. My mom always said I was a trouble maker. Well that's it. That's all I wanted to get off my humble, steadfast shoulders. Time to find some food!





## Fall Education Update

An update on ASCCA education happenings and a thank you to our funders and volunteers.

November snow has landed (and melted) and we have completed our fall programs. We had quite a flurry, or should I say, 'furry' of experiences this past season. With one Open Minds class, three moose sauntered in front of us as the class of 30 students and adults were walking along Fescue Trail. The teacher had requested the opportunity to see moose and the ASCCA delivered. Deer demonstrated their technical skills as one class observed the decisions the deer faced when dealing with wildlife friendly fencing – jump over or crawl under? The ruffed grouse quietly camouflaged within the Aspen forest, but not so quietly made its winged exit from the spruce tree to the delight of another group of students.

These varied learning opportunities would not have been possible without the support of our valued funders including the support of **Chevron Canada Resources** for our Open Minds programming; the **Evergreen Youth Action Series** for our bat box building workshop for students with special needs; the **Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan**



*Students from Connaught School 'taking flight' during a program.*

for our nocturnal educational programming; and **Conoco Phillips** for their continued support towards educational programming at the ASCCA. These donors have allowed us to welcome students with many different life experiences and provide them with experiential nature immersed learning.

We also would like to thank our fantastic and highly adaptable volunteer educators, especially Diane Crowley and Mike Street, who provided the necessary extra trail coverage this past season while our Educational Interpreter was out of

commission. Thank you for being a part of our volunteer team!

**Maureen Luchsinger**  
Education Coordinator



## Remembering ASCCA Volunteer Marty Lynn Barvir

Last November, Marty Lynn Barvir joined our volunteer team as an area steward. In March, we received news that Marty had passed. I am honoured that I had the pleasure of meeting someone with such a strong connection to nature, and such a warm and positive spirit. Marty demonstrated commitment and enthusiasm during her time as a volunteer, braving the winter cold several times to complete her reports. We would like to extend sincere gratitude towards Marty's family, who requested that individuals make contributions to the ASCCA in her memory. - Anna Aldridge



*While growing up hiking and camping in Southern Alberta and Waterton Lakes National Park, I developed a love of the outdoors and an appreciation of unaltered landscapes. I would love to be able to do my part to not only preserve nature but also expose this beautiful area to the uninitiated.*

- Marty's volunteer application



Area Steward volunteers



**Ann & Sandy Cross  
Conservation Area**  
20-194001  
160 Street West  
Foothills AB  
T1S 4K9

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#### Stay Connected!

Join our online communities by  
following @ASCCConservation  
on Twitter and Facebook.



**Conservation matters.** With caring and support from donors like you we are able to continue to protect vital native habitat for the diverse wildlife that call the Cross Conservation Area home, and to ensure that we can continue to provide valuable education programs, especially for young people. Our important role is to raise awareness of conservation issues to inspire people of all ages to work towards a better, more sustainable future.

Thank you to our newsletter contributors Anna Aldridge, Rachel Kubitz, Ursula Wiese, Zachary Mager, Martha Clarke, Pierre Tremblay, Reg Rempel and Maureen Luchsinger. A thanks also goes out to all of our volunteers and donors who have supported our conservation and education efforts. Without you, 30 years of conservation would not have been possible. We hope you'll be a part of our story for years to come. *Cheers, from the ASCCA.*

## Support the Legacy

Visit [crossconservation.org/donate](http://crossconservation.org/donate) for more information.



#### How can you get involved?

Sponsor a community conservation learning event (food/drinks, etc.)

Bring your team to the ASCCA for:  
Environmental volunteering/team-building

- Tree planting
- Removing invasive weeds
- Fencing repair and install
- Various other special projects

Or rent our building for a function or retreat

#### Other examples

- Become a significant sponsor for our conservation education programs
- Help us to build a space for outdoor events
- Sponsor the building of a new picnic shelter
- Contribute to installing new trail signs and improving trail conditions (for example, adding gravel to improve traction)

Donations cover everything from the costs of bringing students out for education programs, paying staff salaries, upkeep of our building and daily operations, maintaining trails, putting up wildlife friendly fencing and reintroducing native species (such as beavers).

Please contact us if you would like to donate to our general fund or a specific area. Contributions from our valued donors and volunteers are absolutely essential and allow us to continue our mission.

Email [info@crossconservation.org](mailto:info@crossconservation.org) or call 403.931.1042.  
Together, we can continue Ann and Sandy's conservation legacy.

Special Projects volunteers

