



mistakis institute
APPLIED CONSERVATION RESEARCH

THE INVALUABLE NATURE OF COLLABORATION

A look at our 2024/25 year



COLLABORATION IS CENTRAL TO THE MIISTAKIS INSTITUTE'S ABILITY TO DELIVER HIGH-IMPACT, SCIENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS TO COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES.

By working collaboratively with governments, non-profits, Indigenous communities, academic institutions, and landowners, Miistakis leverages a diversity of expertise, perspectives, and resources. These relationships allow the Institute to co-develop research questions, ensure findings are grounded in real-world contexts, and amplify the reach and application of its work. Collaborations also help bridge the science-policy interface, ensuring that data and insights generated by Miistakis inform decision-making at multiple levels.

Over the past year, Miistakis has strengthened existing collaborations and cultivated new ones to expand its impact across Alberta and beyond. Whether working on ecological corridor planning, advancing citizen science initiatives, or supporting land use policy development, these collaborations have enabled the Institute to remain responsive, innovative, and solutions-focused. They are not just a means of achieving project goals—they are integral to Miistakis' mission of empowering evidence-based conservation. As the environmental landscape continues to evolve, these collaborations will remain essential in fostering shared understanding, building capacity, and achieving lasting conservation outcomes.

Over the past year we have worked with 50 different organizations – including NGO's, Indigenous communities, academic institutions, industry, municipal, provincial and federal government agencies. This year we profile some of these collaborations to highlight the diverse ways working together has enhanced our work, enabled innovative solutions, and helped translate science into meaningful conservation outcomes.

We extend our sincere thanks to all of our collaborators and funders for their continued support. Your commitment makes our work possible and drives the collective impact we achieve for conservation

Keep reading to learn more about the power of collaboration.



Danah Duke, Executive Director

VISION

A world where communities have genuine access to the science and research they need to make choices that promote healthy landscapes.

MISSION

The Miistakis Institute brings people and ideas together to promote healthy communities and landscapes. We study the landscape, so we can help people maintain it; and we work to make innovative research accessible to communities and decision-makers.

ABOUT US

The Miistakis Institute is a registered charity that undertakes applied conservation research to enable responsible and sustainable decisions to support biodiversity, ecological connectivity and nature-based climate adaptation.

Miistakis is a Blackfoot word that translates to ‘backbone of the world’. When Miistakis was first formed in 1997, the work of the institute focused on the Crown of the Continent ecosystem. The Crown of the Continent is a geographical area centered on the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park and stretches along the axis of the Rocky Mountains spanning southwest Alberta, southeast British Columbia and northern Montana, a place known to the Blackfoot people as the backbone of the world.



MRU

Mount Royal University (MRU) is one of the Miistakis Institute's most important and enduring collaborators, providing both a foundational home and a continual source of partnership, innovation, and support. In 2024 Miistakis celebrated 10 years of collaboration with MRU. We marked the occasion with a celebratory gathering, hosted at MRU, showcasing our work with MRU faculty and support of students over the past decade.

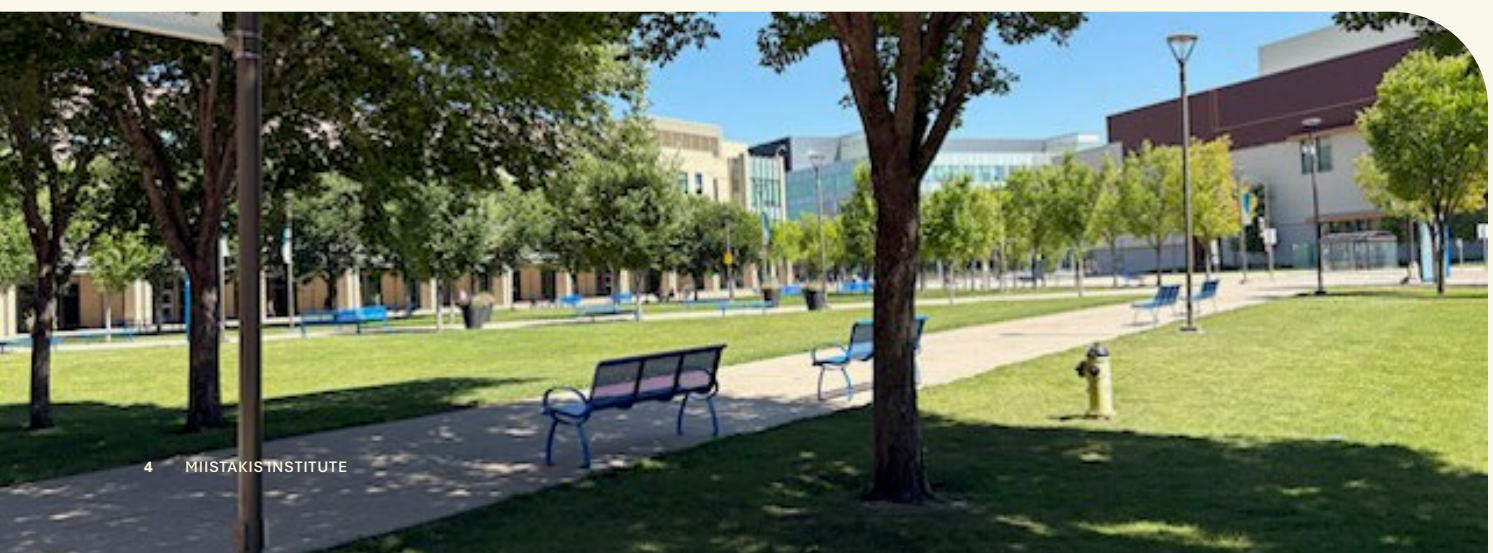
“Gaining work experience and making connections is such an integral part of a post-secondary education. Through the Mount Royal General science program 5030 course, I was able to work alongside the Miistakis Institute, contributing to the goals and objectives of the Beavers from Space through data collection and analysis. This was a really fun opportunity to meet new professional people on the campus and explore topics I had previously very little knowledge on. This opportunity allows students to explore topics that may stick with them and discover new interests that could lead their career decisions.”

GILLIAN TWIBLE, 4TH YEAR MRU STUDENT

As an institute affiliated with MRU, Miistakis benefits from access to the academic community, credibility and academic alignment. Our affiliation fosters meaningful collaboration between Miistakis and MRU faculty, staff, and students. Joint research projects, community engagement initiatives, and shared learning experiences have expanded our ability to pursue impactful community-driven conservation solutions.

In addition to providing institutional support, MRU plays a key role in shaping Miistakis's mission to bridge science and decision-making. Through joint research projects, interdisciplinary initiatives, and student mentorship, MRU enhances the Institute's capacity to tackle complex environmental challenges. This partnership reflects a shared commitment to knowledge mobilization and meaningful impact, making MRU not just a host institution, but a true collaborator in advancing Miistakis's vision for sustainable landscapes and informed conservation action.

Being part of MRU allows the Miistakis Institute to engage directly with students, providing them with real-world experience and opportunities to contribute to environmental initiatives. This benefits both the students, who gain hands-on learning experiences, and Miistakis, which gains fresh perspectives and additional capacity to advance its conservation goals. Over the past year Miistakis worked with 10 MRU students ranging across Work Integrated Learning programs, short term contracts and summer placements.





“

My career in wildlife conservation and spatial analysis has been greatly influenced by my work with the Miistakis Institute. As a research assistant, I was able to obtain practical experience in environmental research methodology, GIS-based analysis, and data processing and interpretation. My future career goals in environmental management and conservation research have been greatly aided by the mentorship and advice I received at Miistakis.

”

SONIA ULEBOR, 4TH YEAR MRU STUDENT



NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA

The collaboration between the Miistakis Institute and Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has been instrumental in advancing both the Linking Landscapes project and Reconnecting the Rockies Alberta. By combining Miistakis's expertise in ecological connectivity science and spatial modeling with NCC's extensive conservation experience and on-the-ground presence, the collaboration enhances the ability to identify and protect critical wildlife corridors across southern Alberta. Together, they ensure that connectivity data and tools are directly applied to conservation planning and land securement strategies. This collaboration strengthens the effectiveness of both initiatives, contributing to more resilient landscapes and the long-term movement needs of species across the region.



RECONNECTING THE ROCKIES ALBERTA

Reconnecting the Rockies Alberta is a project focused on identifying, protecting, and enhancing wildlife movement corridors in the southern Canadian Rockies. This region is a critical landscape for wide-ranging species such as grizzly bears, wolves, elk, and wolverines, whose survival depends on their ability to move freely across vast areas. The project aims to maintain and restore ecological connectivity between key habitats that are increasingly threatened by roads, development, and other human activities.

Through a combination of spatial modeling, research, and collaboration with land managers, governments, and communities, Reconnecting the Rockies Alberta supports conservation planning that prioritizes functional wildlife corridors. Over the past year our research efforts have focused on deploying satellite collars and remote cameras to gather data on how wildlife move across the landscape to help inform new wildlife crossing structures along Highway 3.

In addition to monitoring wildlife movement along Highway 3, Reconnecting the Rockies Alberta has been working with the Municipal District of Pincher Creek to delineate an ecological network. Over the past year this work included developing a structural connectivity model to identify areas of core habitat and connectivity and an analysis of animal vehicle collision hotspots. A multi-stakeholder workshop including municipal planners, scientists and NGO's provided opportunity for identifying strategies to conserve the ecological network.

ADDITIONAL COLLABORATORS

- Biodiversity Pathways
- Alberta Environment and Protected Areas
- University of British Columbia Okanagan
- Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

FUNDERS

- Parks Canada National Program for Ecological Corridors
- Calgary Foundation
- Wilburforce Foundation
- Woodcock Foundation
- Alberta Minister's Special License Resident Draw Grant

OLDMAN RIVER REGIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Miistakis's collaboration with the **Oldman River Regional Services Commission (ORRSC)** highlights the critical role that municipal planning plays in advancing conservation. By working with ORRSC, Miistakis supports the integration of ecological data and landscape connectivity considerations into land-use planning processes across southern Alberta. This collaboration helps municipalities make informed decisions that balance development with long-term environmental sustainability. Together, Miistakis and ORRSC demonstrate how thoughtful, science-based planning at the local level can contribute meaningfully to regional conservation goals.



ADDITIONAL COLLABORATORS

- M.D. Pincher Creek

FUNDERS

- Alberta Real Estate Foundation



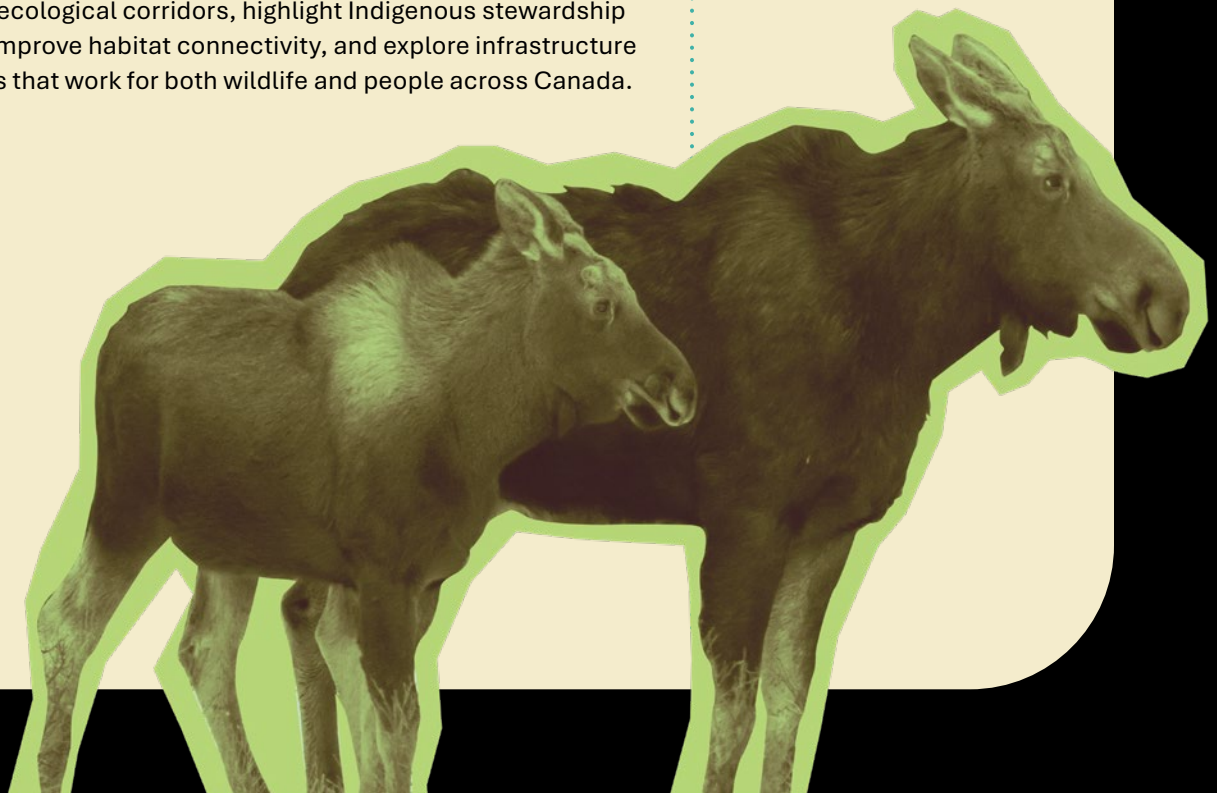
PARKS CANADA

Launched in 2021, **The Parks Canada National Program for Ecological Corridors** works to advance ecological connectivity across Canada by collaborating with Indigenous partners, governments, experts, and stakeholders. It maintains national criteria for corridors, identifies and maps priority areas to address biodiversity loss, and provides funding for on-the-ground conservation, restoration, and stewardship efforts. The program also aims to inspire broader action in support of ecological corridors and connectivity nationwide. As a grant recipient, the Miistakis Institute has benefited from the support of this program to advance our work on landscape connectivity in the southern Canadian Rockies, through the Reconnecting the Rockies Alberta project.



CANADIAN ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY AND CORRIDOR CONFERENCE

In 2024, the Miistakis Institute proudly co-hosted, together with Parks Canada, Y2Y, ARC Solutions and Alberta Conservation Association, the inaugural Canadian Ecological Connectivity and Corridor Conference, a national gathering of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers focused on advancing landscape connectivity. Miistakis played a key role in shaping the program, facilitating knowledge exchange, and highlighting the importance of integrating ecological corridors into land-use planning and conservation policy across Canada. The goal of the conference was to connect, collaborate, and share ideas that support ecological corridors, highlight Indigenous stewardship values, improve habitat connectivity, and explore infrastructure solutions that work for both wildlife and people across Canada.



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

As a key collaborator in Nature's Network, **Rocky View County** has worked with Miistakis over the past year to delineate and map areas of high ecological connectivity within the municipality. This work directly informed the inclusion of an ecological network in the County's updated Municipal Development Plan (MDP), marking a significant step toward integrating biodiversity and connectivity considerations into long-term land-use planning. By incorporating this network into policy, Rocky View County is demonstrating leadership in balancing growth with ecological resilience, ensuring that critical habitats and wildlife movement corridors are recognized and supported through future planning and development decisions.



NATURE'S NETWORK

Nature's Network is a multi-year initiative that includes wildlife monitoring using remote cameras, and the development of terrestrial and aquatic ecological networks around the City of Calgary. Our work over the past year has focused on identifying core habitat patches that support terrestrial wildlife movement and understanding their ecological importance. It includes mapping areas of high connectivity value, delineating wildlife corridors to inform municipal planning, and pinpointing locations where road mitigation could enhance wildlife passage. Together, these efforts contribute to defining an ecological network that municipalities can use to guide land-use decisions and conserve biodiversity.



ADDITIONAL COLLABORATORS

- City of Calgary
- Alberta Parks
- Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society
- Weaselhead Glenmore Park Preservation Society

FUNDERS

- Calgary Foundation
- TD Friends of Environment Foundation

SOUTHERN ALBERTA LAND TRUST SOCIETY



Both the **Southern Alberta Land Trust Society (SALTS)** and the Miistakis Institute share a commitment to protecting ecologically significant landscapes, particularly on private land. Miistakis brings expertise in applied research, spatial analysis, and conservation planning, while SALTS has deep connections with landowners and a long history of securing private land for conservation. By collaborating, we are able to integrate robust science with on-the-ground conservation action. This partnership strengthens efforts to maintain habitat connectivity, protect water resources, and support working landscapes that sustain both biodiversity and rural communities. Our joint initiatives ensure that conservation solutions are both scientifically sound and practically achievable.



VALUE OF PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION IN ALBERTA

Private land conservation (PLC) is an important strategy for conservation in Alberta contributing meaningfully to watershed resiliency, climate change resiliency, biodiversity, and human well-being. Over the past year we have worked with the private land conservation community in Alberta to update metrics as part of an interactive website that highlights the value of land trusts and private land conservation in Alberta. We continued to support private land conservation efforts by hosting and maintaining tools and resources that support strategic conservation planning. But the impact of PLC isn't just about the numbers. We turned to real stories - case studies – that show what it really looks like on the ground and why it matters.



ADDITIONAL COLLABORATORS

- Alberta Conservation Association
- Crooked Creek Conservancy Society of Athabasca (CCCSA)
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Edmonton Area Land Trust
- Foothills Land Trust
- Legacy Land Trust
- Nature Conservancy of Canada (Alberta office)
- Western Sky Land Trust

FUNDERS

- Environment and Climate Change Canada

ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTED AREAS

The Miistakis Institute's collaboration with Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (AEPA) has been central to the development and success of the Alberta Citizen Science Community of Practice. Over the past decade Miistakis has worked with AEPA to develop the Citizen Science Principles of Good Practice, host workshops to support practitioners and design and implement the CitSci Alberta Hub, a collaborative platform that brings together individuals, organizations, and agencies involved in citizen science across the province. This partnership has enabled the sharing of best practices, tools, and resources, while fostering greater coordination and capacity among citizen science practitioners. By working closely with AEPA, Miistakis supports the integration of citizen-generated data into environmental monitoring and decision-making, helping to strengthen both community engagement and evidence-based conservation in Alberta.

Additionally, as part of the Reconnecting the Rockies Alberta project, Miistakis's collaboration with Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (AEPA) has been essential to advancing provincial-scale connectivity conservation. By working with AEPA, Miistakis ensures that the project's science-based tools and recommendations align with government priorities and can effectively inform land-use decisions and policy development. This collaboration enhances the impact and applicability of the project, helping to protect critical wildlife corridors and maintain ecological integrity across the southern Rockies.



SUPPORTING THE ALBERTA CITIZEN SCIENCE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The Alberta Citizen Science Community of Practice (CoP) is made up of almost 400 dedicated practitioners who are keen to build capacity and tools for citizen science, expand the use of citizen science data, and grow the community of practice. The CoP aims to bring together and support citizen science practitioners, researchers, environmental managers, educators, project coordinators, and volunteers by promoting coordination and collaboration among them. Over the past year Miistakis has supported the Cit Sci CoP through the launch of the CitSci Alberta Hub – a space to connect, collaborate and celebrate.



BOW RIVER BASIN COUNCIL

The **Bow River Basin Council (BRBC)** is a trusted voice on matters surrounding water in the Bow Basin. Miistakis' collaboration with the BRBC has elevated our ability to provide reliable water-focused data and improve access to and understanding of water resources to a wide range of end-users. Working together, Miistakis and the BRBC demonstrate how complex data can be translated into meaningful insights that spark dialogue and lead to tangible solutions.



IMPROVING WETLAND MANAGEMENT

Wetlands are natural assets that play a vital role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. They provide ecosystem services like flood and drought mitigation, water purification, and enhanced biodiversity. Accurate wetland mapping is essential to keep connected, functional wetlands on the landscape. To address this, we partnered with the Bow River Basin Council (BRBC) and Fiera Biological Consulting to develop and share four wetland-focused datasets to support municipalities and Indigenous communities in decision making and operations related to wetlands. Over the past year we worked with partners like the City of Calgary, the BRBC and Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute to highlight ways these datasets can be used to support their planning processes, inform policy development, and guide conservation and land-use decisions. We also co-organized and presented at the BRBC's Legislation and Policy Committee Workshop on Wetlands and Natural Infrastructure in a Changing Climate.



COWS AND FISH

The 13-year partnership between the Miistakis Institute and **Cows and Fish** is foundational to the success of the Working with Beavers collaborative. By combining Miistakis' expertise in applied research and landscape-level planning with Cows and Fish's deep knowledge of riparian health and community engagement, the two organizations have created a powerful alliance for promoting coexistence with beavers. Together, we provide tools, training, and science-based guidance to landowners, municipalities, and land managers, helping them understand and manage the ecological benefits and challenges of beaver activity. This collaboration strengthens the impact and reach of the initiative, supporting more resilient watersheds and nature-based solutions across Alberta.

Together, the Working with Beavers collaborative and the Piikani Lands Department worked to restore watershed health on Piikani Nation lands through the installation of beaver dam analogues (BDAs)—human-made structures designed to mimic the ecological functions of natural beaver dams.

This collaboration is grounded in mutual respect and a shared recognition of the cultural, ecological, and hydrological significance of beavers. The Piikani Lands Department brings deep traditional knowledge and land-based experience, while the collaborative contributes technical expertise in BDA design, monitoring, and implementation. By restoring wetland and riparian habitats through BDAs, the project supports climate resilience, biodiversity, and traditional values related to water and land.



WORKING WITH BEAVERS

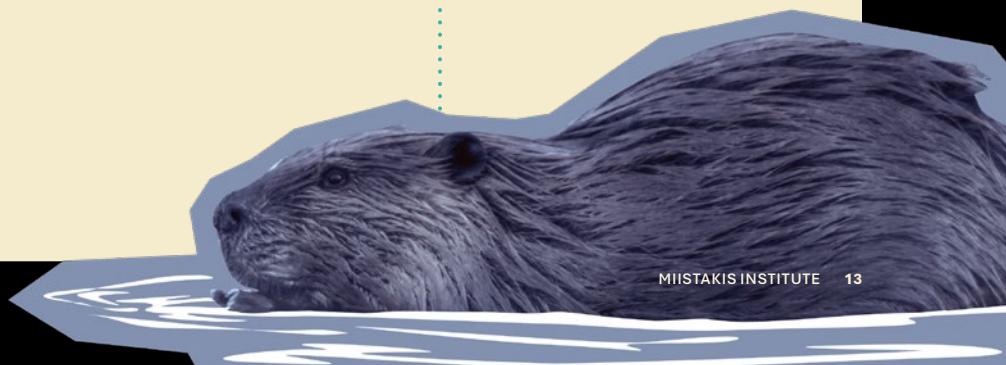
Our Working with Beavers collaborative continues to foster coexistence, highlighting the significant ecosystem and watershed benefits beavers contribute to the landscape. This year we continued to demonstrate the utility of beaver dam analogues (BDAs) with the installation of 16 BDA structures at the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area, 4 structures on the Piikani Nation along with on-going remote sensing analysis to determine changes to vegetation pre and post BDA installation. We also launched the Beaver Beneficial Management Practices which are designed to offer practical, accessible tools for beaver management in a way that supports coexistence, ecological health, and the vital ecosystem services beavers provide. To accompany this, we created case studies on the utility of the BMPs, showcasing how they can be implemented in municipalities in Alberta. By implementing these best practices, we can help maintain beavers on the landscape, which in turn strengthens watershed and climate change resilience.

ADDITIONAL COLLABORATORS

- Blood Tribe Land Management
- Piikani Nation Lands Department

FUNDERS

- Alberta Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program
- Alberta Innovates
- Calgary Foundation
- Alberta Ecotrust



ALBERTA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Miistakis has been working with the **Alberta Conservation Association** for over 9 years, advancing ecological connectivity for pronghorn and other grassland species. By combining Miistakis's strengths in applied research and ecological modeling with ACA's on-the-ground conservation expertise and strong connections to landowners and communities, the two organizations are able to design and implement more effective, evidence-based strategies. This collaboration supports shared goals such as protecting wildlife habitat, enhancing biodiversity, and promoting sustainable land use, and exemplifies the power of partnership in achieving meaningful conservation outcomes.



PRONGHORN XING

Pronghorn Xing is a collaborative initiative led by the Miistakis Institute, Alberta Conservation Association and the Canadian Wildlife Federation to enhance the movement of grassland species across the Northern Sagebrush Steppe, with a primary focus on pronghorn. Past research has focused on identifying road mitigation along the Trans-Canada Highway (TCH) as a key strategy to enable safe passage for wildlife. Over this past year, we launched a monitoring program using remote cameras and autonomous recording units to better understand how mammals and birds use the road edge across space and time. In parallel, we continued to develop outreach materials and convene meetings with key stakeholders and rightsholders to advance collaborative solutions in the region.

ADDITIONAL COLLABORATORS

- Canadian Wildlife Federation
- Alberta Environment and Protected Areas
- Alberta Forestry and Parks
- Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors
- Dialogue
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Saskatchewan Government Insurance
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure

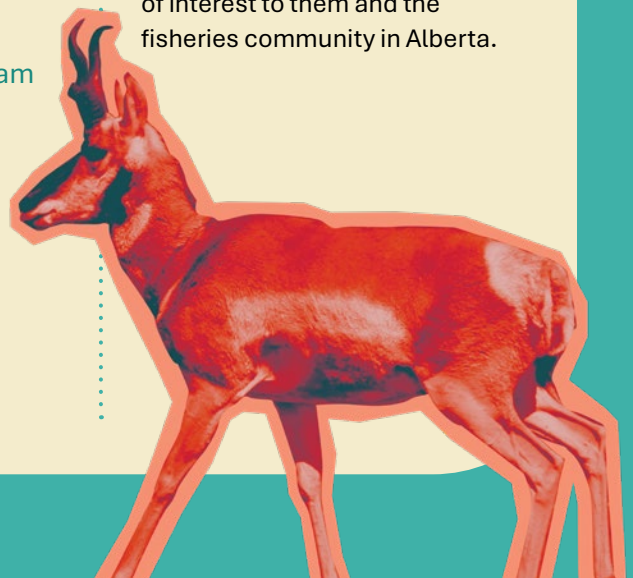
FUNDERS

- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Parks Canada National Program for Ecological Corridors
- National Fish and Wildlife Federation



ACA TROUT SUMMARY

Alberta is home to three federally listed at-risk native trout species. Although these species are at risk, they are an important part of Alberta's recreational (catch-and-release) fishery. Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) conducts regular monitoring of these populations and their habitats to contribute to the recovery efforts. As a result of years of monitoring, ACA has developed a robust fisheries dataset. This past year, we worked with ACA to conduct statistical analyses to answer key questions of interest to them and the fisheries community in Alberta.



REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- [Ecological Corridor Overlay: Recommendations for Implementation in Rural Municipalities](#)
- [Development Mitigation Guidelines for Ecological Corridors](#)
- [Value of Private Land Conservation in Alberta 3.0](#)
- [Private Land Conservation in Alberta Overview \(2024\)](#)
- [Private Land Conservation in Alberta Working Landscapes \(2024\)](#)
- [Private Land Conservation in Alberta A Look Through Time \(2024\)](#)
- [Expert-assisted statistical learning techniques for assessing wetland conditions in urban landscapes](#)
- [Bow River Regional Wetland Datasets One Pager](#)
- [Calgary Connect - Ecological Network Graphic 2024](#)
- [Calgary Connect: 5 Year Graphical Summary](#)

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FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

March 31

	2025	2024
Assets		
<i>Current</i>		
Cash	\$ 576,149	\$ 591,900
Accounts receivable	87,283	148,140
Accrued project receivables	13,287	16,910
GST receivable	6,353	–
Short term investment (Note 2)	–	358,309
Prepaid expenses	1,108	1,705
	684,180	1,116,964
<i>Investments (Note 3)</i>	533,695	482,864
<i>Equipment (Note 4)</i>	16,566	18,432
	\$1,234,441	\$1,618,260
Liabilities and Net Assets		
<i>Current</i>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 94,337	\$ 28,463
Wages payable	66,768	75,583
Deferred contributions related to operations (Note 5)	228,808	696,970
	389,913	801,016
<i>Deferred contribution related to equipment (Note 6)</i>	228	295
	390,141	801,311
<i>Net assets</i>		
Invested in equipment	16,339	18,137
Internally restricted (Note 7)	380,000	380,000
Unrestricted	447,961	418,812
	844,300	816,949
	\$1,234,441	\$1,618,260

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the year ended March 31

	2025	2024
Revenue		
Government grants	\$ 650,433	\$ 290,477
Foundation and other grants	524,318	425,943
Services	127,281	533,539
Donations	53,591	149,418
Endowment income (Note 8)	1,251	3,435
Events	500	6,800
	1,357,374	1,409,612
Expenditures		
Wages and benefits	689,749	684,471
Subcontract	503,829	446,406
Supplies	85,108	10,574
Professional fees	42,944	35,422
Travel	28,569	29,736
Rent	12,150	12,300
Software	12,017	11,328
Workshop	9,900	15,823
Insurance	7,958	7,958
Amortization	6,070	5,019
Telephone and utilities	1,269	966
Advertising and promotion	199	294
Interest and bank charges	105	25
Training	–	677
	1,399,867	1,260,999
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures before undernoted items	(42,493)	148,613
Other income		
Gain on investments	26,674	14,312
Unrealized (loss) gain on investment	18,008	7,786
Interest	14,058	19,698
Dividend income	11,104	10,905
	69,844	52,701
Excess of revenue over expenditures for the year	\$ 27,351	\$ 201,314

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

For the year ended March 31

	Invested in equipment	Internally restricted	Unrestricted	Total 2025	Total 2024
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 18,136	\$ 380,000	\$ 418,813	\$ 816,949	\$ 615,635
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year	(6,001)	–	33,352	27,351	201,314
Purchase of equipment	4,204	–	(4,204)	–	–
Balance, end of year	\$ 16,339	\$ 380,000	\$ 447,961	\$ 844,300	\$ 816,949



miistakis institute
APPLIED CONSERVATION RESEARCH



Miistakis Institute

EB 3013
Mount Royal University
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW
Calgary, AB T3E 6K6
institute@rockies.ca

ROCKIES.CA



Ecological Connectivity
Biodiversity
Nature-based Solutions

