



miistakis institute
APPLIED CONSERVATION RESEARCH



MEET MIISTAKIS

Celebrating our people, their work and
their project highlights from this past year





**ONE LESSON I HAVE
LEARNED OVER THE
YEARS IS THAT
CONSERVATION IS,
FIRST AND FOREMOST,
ABOUT PEOPLE.**

While our work is often measured by healthier watersheds, connected landscapes, or improved biodiversity, none of those outcomes happen on their own. They are the result of passionate people asking good questions, building trusted relationships, sharing knowledge, and working together over many years toward a common goal. Every success we celebrate in this report reflects the dedication of our staff, Board, partners, funders and volunteers. Conservation is ultimately about people, and I feel incredibly fortunate to work alongside individuals who bring both exceptional expertise and genuine care to everything they do.

This year is particularly meaningful for our team as we celebrate three staff members who have each dedicated more than 25 years to Miistakis. I am humbled to be one of them. Tracy Lee, our Director of Conservation Research and Ken Sanderson, our GIS Analyst also both celebrate >25 years at Miistakis. Looking back over the past quarter century, I am struck not by how much has changed, but by how much has remained constant: our belief that lasting conservation happens through collaboration, science, and a willingness to work together. While the challenges facing our environment continue to evolve, so too does the passion, creativity, and resilience of the people who take them on. Reaching this milestone has reinforced for me that with the right people around the table, we can continue to find practical solutions that benefit both nature and the communities that depend on it. It is a privilege to be part of this journey, and I am deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to Miistakis over the past 25 years and to those who will help shape our next chapter.

To bring our work over the past year to life, we asked staff to share highlights from their work over the past year in their own words. Their reflections capture not only what was accomplished, but why the work matters and what continues to inspire them, and hopefully lets you get to know the Miistakis team!



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 HIGHLIGHTS

This year also marked an important milestone for Miistakis with the successful renewal of our affiliation with Mount Royal University. Our relationship with the university has been an integral part of who we are for more than a decade, providing a strong foundation for applied research, innovation, and community impact.

“MRU’s affiliation with Miistakis supports institutional goals for applied research that is community engaged and includes undergraduate students. Miistakis has created valuable experiences for our faculty and students while advancing conservation and broader sustainability objectives. We look forward to another 5 years of impact!”

CONNIE VAN DER BYL, ACADEMIC DIRECTOR,
MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

The renewed affiliation reflects a shared commitment to connecting academic knowledge with real-world environmental challenges and ensures that Miistakis can continue to bridge the gap between science and action. A key highlight from our affiliation over the past 5 years include providing 44 MRU students with applied research experience through paid internships, capstone projects, work-integrated learning, and volunteer opportunities.

Beyond strengthening our research capacity, our partnership with Mount Royal University creates meaningful opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience while contributing to projects that make a tangible difference across Alberta and beyond. We are proud to be part of a university that values community-

engaged scholarship and recognizes the importance of applied conservation science. We look forward to continuing this partnership, fostering the next generation of environmental leaders, and demonstrating how collaboration between academia and community organizations can deliver lasting benefits for both people and nature.

This year, our support of MRU students included hiring Alexa Storoziuk, an MRU biology student as a summer research assistant working on a Waterton Lakes National Park Amphibian Tunnel project. Additionally, we supported 9 students as part of their Work Integrated Learning programs.





RECONNECTING THE ROCKIES ALBERTA

I had the opportunity to work with a multidisciplinary team of scientists to develop a long-term research and monitoring program evaluating the effectiveness of a new wildlife road mitigation system constructed by the Government of Alberta. The project spans a 56 km section of Highway 3 in the Canadian Rocky Mountains and includes a network of wildlife crossing structures connected by wildlife-exclusion fencing.



The primary goal of the mitigation system is to reduce animal vehicle collisions and improve motorist safety while maintaining ecological connectivity by enabling large mammals to safely cross the highway using purpose-built overpasses and underpasses, as well as retrofitted bridges. To evaluate the effectiveness of these measures, our partnership deployed more than 100 remote cameras at crossing structures, along the highway corridor, and throughout the surrounding landscape. This extensive monitoring network provides valuable information on species occurrence and allows us to examine how wildlife use the landscape by assessing spatial and temporal patterns of animal activity both near and away from Highway 3.

To complement the camera network and understand broader landscape level effects of the new road mitigation system on large mammals' species we have put GPS collars on 12 grizzly bears, 12 mule deer and 20 elk. With the wonder of modern technology, we can see how these animals are moving around the landscape almost in real time. We can use this data to determine where animals are currently crossing the road and how they change movement as structures are built along the highway.

A special highlight for me this year, was being able to participate in grizzly bear capture and collaring – maximum respect to lead partners Environment and Protected Areas (EPA) and Biodiversity Pathways for their field expertise in collaring grizzlies. It was truly a once in a lifetime experience that I will never forget. And I would be remiss not to mention the genuine excitement when the Rock Creek remote cameras captured a moose and twin calves using the new purpose build underpass!

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS:

Nature Conservancy Canada, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, Biodiversity Pathways, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, National Parks Ecological Corridors Program, Calgary Foundation, Wilburforce Foundation, Woodcock Foundation, ACA Ministers Special License Program.





MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF PINCHER CREEK ECOLOGICAL NETWORK

A big focus of my work this year included building the connectivity model behind Miistakis' ecological network for the Municipal District of Pincher Creek, across roughly 3,500 square kilometres of grassland, foothills, and forested slopes in the Crown of the Continent. The question underneath the work is a simple one: as agriculture, rural development, recreation, and energy continue to reshape this landscape, where do animals still have room to move?

We developed a structural connectivity model, a map of how well natural areas are physically linked, without assuming any particular species, and then tested it against real animal data, including GPS collars from 182 elk and occurrence records for moose, grizzly bear, black bear, and badger. Elk and moose aligned well with the model, bears and badgers did not, largely because their movement is shaped by human activity and attractants as much as by habitat. That mismatch turned out to be one of the more useful findings: it tells us where a species-agnostic model is enough, and where it isn't.

To make the results usable for planning, we sorted connectivity into channelized areas (pinch points), diffuse areas (many options), and impeded areas, and mapped these against land management, municipal zoning, and the highway network. Just over half of the important connectivity areas sit on provincially managed land and the rest on private land, which means no single agency can maintain this network on its own. We also identified 30 km of provincial highway where collision hotspots overlap with high connectivity, an obvious starting point for conversations about crossing structures.

In May we brought 17 conservation practitioners together to review the maps and shape five conservation strategies, which now feed into the MD's forthcoming connectivity action plan.

What I find most satisfying about this kind of work is watching an abstract model become something people can act on.

A connectivity surface is a gradient of numbers; it doesn't tell a planner anything. Sorting it into channelized, diffuse, and impeded areas, and then reviewing with practitioners at the workshop, was the moment the modelling stopped being a map and started being a decision-support tool.



A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS:

Dr. Adam Ford at UBC Okanagan, the M.D. of Pincher Creek, Parks Canada's National Program for Ecological Corridors, the Calgary Foundation, Wilburforce Foundation, Woodcock Foundation, Alberta Real Estate Foundation, Minister's Special Licence Resident Draw Grants.



PRONGHORN XING

Over the last year, I have spent a lot of time thinking about connectivity in the grasslands and what that means for pronghorn, and the many other species that call this unique landscape home. Grasslands are among Canada's most threatened ecosystems due to conversion to agriculture, residential, and industrial development. Grassland species, such as pronghorn, are particularly affected by barriers such as highways, railways, and fences. Pronghorn Xing addresses these challenges by informing decisions related to linear infrastructure, with a specific focus on the creation of a road mitigation system for the TransCanada Highway. The project is a partnership between Alberta Conservation Association, Canadian Wildlife Federation and the Miistakis Institute.

One highlight this year was working with DIALOG to create design renderings of what wildlife overpasses and underpasses could look like in the grasslands.

I've become so accustomed to picturing crossing structures in mountainous landscapes like Banff National Park that seeing them imagined in the prairie really brought the concept to life for me.

In September 2025 we hosted the Saskatchewan Road Ecology Conference, bringing together conservation practitioners and representatives from Saskatchewan's Ministries of Environment and Highways to advance road ecology in prairie ecosystems, share successful mitigation efforts, and identify practical strategies for improving habitat connectivity and reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions.

This year our team wrapped up a two-year biodiversity monitoring program at six proposed pronghorn enhancement sites along the Trans-Canada Highway. This included the development of a technical report and a graphic summary. We documented a diverse range of grassland taxa including several species at risk, including badger, Great Plains toad, bullsnake, and multiple grassland bird species.

Building on that work, we conducted a literature review and targeted expert interviews to create *Wildlife crossing structure design: Pronghorn and Grassland Species Guidance* which links species ecology and movement behaviour to actionable design solutions for transportation planning.

Throughout the year, I've enjoyed meeting with Indigenous Communities, environmental organizations, government, and stakeholders. What I value most about this project is the opportunity to contribute to every stage of the process—from scientific assessments and technical guidance to building relationships, finding common ground, and communicating how road mitigation benefits both wildlife and people. Along the way, I've also gained a deep appreciation for pronghorn, an incredibly unique and fascinating species.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS, FUNDERS, AND COLLABORATORS:

Alberta Conservation Association; Canadian Wildlife Federation; Government of Canada, Department of Environment and Climate Change; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation with support from the Bezos Earth Fund, Burger King, Capri Holdings, and Cargill; Parks Canada's National Program for Ecological Corridors; Alberta Environment and Protected Areas; Alberta Ministry of Forestry and Parks; Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors; Dialogue; Nature Conservancy of Canada; Saskatchewan Government Insurance; Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment; Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways

“ The Miistakis Institute continues to lay the critical groundwork to move conservation concepts from ideas to action, with a focus on solutions that tackle challenges for both wildlife and communities. In the case of Pronghorn Crossing, the focus is connectivity (for wildlife, and potentially cattle), highway safety, best management practices, and additional benefits for a broader suite of grassland species, beyond Pronghorn. Tackling big challenges through the lens of the wider community supports a collaborative process from the outset that sets projects up for success over the long term. Pronghorn Xing is another great example of the team taking a conservation challenge, identifying knowledge gaps, and tackling them to start laying the foundation for impactful, multi-partner projects, that lead to real outcomes for wildlife and people that share the same landscape.

CRAIG HARDING – MIISTAKIS BOARD CHAIR, DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION SCIENCE AND PLANNING, NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA (NCC) ”



WETLAND DATASETS



The focus of my Wetland Datasets work this year, is to put the ***Applied*** in Miistakis' tagline, ***Applied Conservation Research*** by developing a series of case studies on the application of the Bow River Region Wetland Datasets. These case studies highlight the practical ways that land managers can use good quality wetland data to support wetland and ecological conservation.

Two case studies completed this year were both in collaboration with Rocky View County. The first, *From Data to Policy – Informing Ecological Connectivity in Rocky View County's Municipal Development Plan*, highlighted the use of the wetlands datasets' land cover data in a 2024 project called Nature's Network, which was a regional effort to identify key natural areas and ecological corridors to keep wildlife moving. The result was a mapped ecological network to support local municipal planning. This work led to the integration of the ecological network in Rocky View County's updated Municipal Development Plan (MDP) in 2025 with plans to also incorporate it into intermunicipal development plans with neighbouring municipalities in the coming years.

The second case study our team completed was *Data Meets Dirt – Supporting Producers through ALUS Rocky View*. It showcases how the wetland datasets can be used to identify areas of high wetland restoration and enhancement potential to promote ALUS projects to potential participants in those areas. They can also help ALUS Rocky View prioritize projects to maximize ecological impact when demand exceeds available funding.

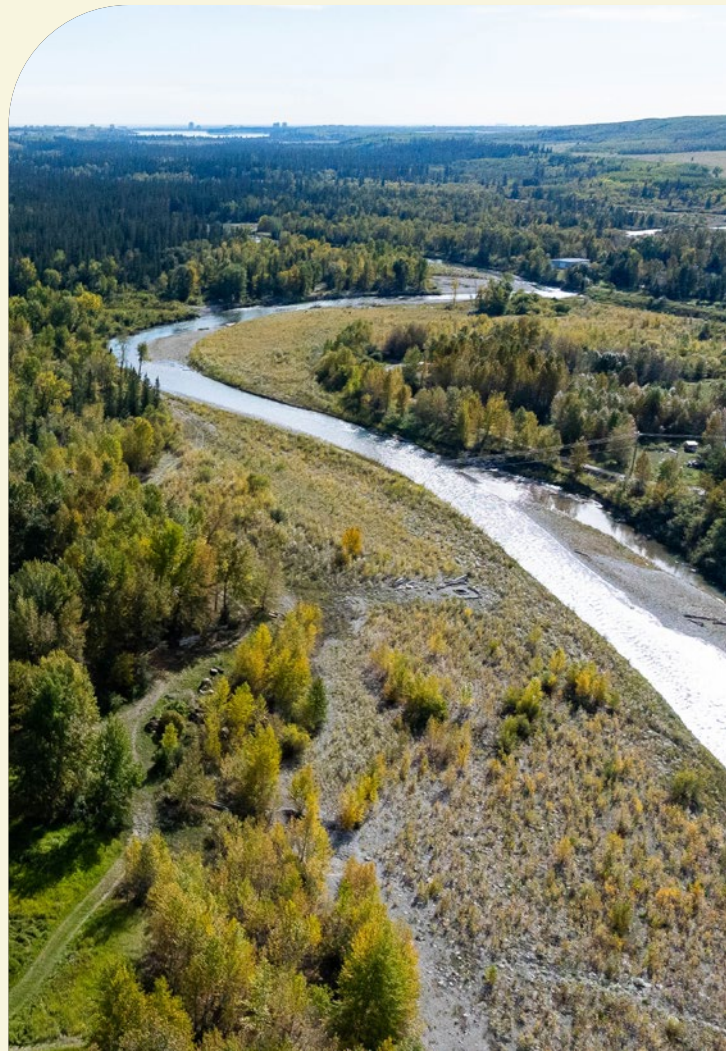
This year we have been working with Dr. Felix Nwashi from Mount Royal University to develop and apply a method to predict wetland condition based on GIS-based data that reflects hydrology and ecology and ultimately predict wetland health.

Our team also had the opportunity to support two Mount Royal University Work-Integrated-Learning students who used the wetlands data to explore wetland health and biodiversity. The students compared our predicted wetland condition to autonomous recording unit (ARU) data that captured amphibian, bird and mammal sounds at wetlands within Calgary, Foothills County, or Rocky View County. Many thanks to the students for their excellent work on their Work-Integrated-Learning projects!

My favourite thing about this project is the opportunity to explore the many ways wetland data can support conservation and research. I've enjoyed working closely with our partners and have been encouraged to see these datasets already being used by planners and agricultural fieldmen to inform real-world decisions. Seeing our research put into practice is incredibly rewarding and reinforces the value of the work we do in supporting conservation across the landscape.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS:

Bow River Basin Council, Government of Alberta's Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program, Anonymous Funder



FROG DOG

If I had to pick a favourite Miistakis project from the past year, it would have to be Frog Dog, an innovative approach to monitoring northern leopard frogs, a species-at-risk in Alberta and British Columbia. After years of admiring conservation detection dogs from afar and recognizing the need for better ways to monitor cryptic species, we finally took the leap and launched the project.

The goal of Frog Dog is to determine whether conservation detection dogs can locate northern leopard frog egg masses and identify breeding sites more effectively than traditional visual surveys. Better detection will improve our understanding of the species' distribution, help evaluate translocation success, and support future recovery efforts. It also has the potential to make monitoring faster, more efficient, and less labour-intensive.

This year, I completed Wildlife Conservation Certified Specialist designation as a Canine Scent Detection Trainer and conducted a literature review on the use of CDDs for amphibian and aquatic species. We also had the opportunity to work with a SAIT practicum student who supported the literature review, helping us build the scientific foundation for the project.



One of my favourite aspects of Frog Dog is the opportunity to collaborate with organizations working toward the same conservation goals. This year we partnered with the Wilder Institute and Waterton Lakes National Park, and next year we'll also be working with Blood Tribe Land Management – Environmental Protection Division.

In the spring, the Wilder Institute provided scent samples from wild and captive northern leopard frog egg masses, which I used to train my dog, Penny, to recognize and indicate the scent. Just three weeks later, Penny and I made our debut deployment as Miistakis' Conservation Detection Dog team in Waterton Lakes National Park. Although we didn't locate egg masses during our first field season, there were encouraging signs that both the scent samples and training methods are working. **We're excited to build on what we've learned and return for another search in spring 2027. Bringing this approach to Alberta has enormous potential to fill gaps in biodiversity monitoring and provide the information needed to make better conservation decisions. After all, you can't conserve what you don't know is there.**

“ The Frog Dog initiative holds potential to significantly improve our ability to locate a critical yet often difficult-to-detect life stage of the northern leopard frog. Holly and Penny's work shows promise as a new tool for addressing one of the most challenging aspects of northern leopard frog conservation and recovery efforts. I am grateful for their innovation and dedication and look forward to seeing the team's continued progress. ”

KIMBERLY PEARSON, NATURE LEGACY
ECOSYSTEM SCIENTIST, WATERTON LAKES
NATIONAL PARK





WORKING WITH BEAVERS – REMOTE SENSING ANALYSIS

This year I got to explore how we can use remote sensing to better understand the long-term impacts of Beaver Dam Analogues (BDAs). It's easy to visit a restoration site and see the changes happening on the ground, but understanding how those changes unfold over time and across entire landscapes is a much bigger challenge. Satellite imagery gives us the opportunity to monitor restoration at a scale that isn't possible through fieldwork alone using the resources we have. It also lets us go back in time to pre-installation conditions — no baseline monitoring foresight required.

This year, I analyzed changes in vegetation greenness around BDA sites in Alberta, comparing conditions before and after restoration and with sites that have natural beaver activity and sites without. While our first analyses didn't detect statistically significant changes yet, that wasn't entirely unexpected. Many of these projects are still in their early years, and ecosystem recovery takes time. More importantly, we've established the foundation for a long-term monitoring program that will allow us to track restoration as these sites continue to evolve.

What I enjoy most about this work is that it lets me combine ecology, statistical analysis, and technology to answer practical conservation questions. There are still relatively few studies that have rigorously assessed the effectiveness of BDAs using remote sensing, so it feels meaningful to help advance that science in Alberta.



Digging into why we didn't detect a clear signal was particularly informative, helping us interpret our results and guiding future iterations of the analysis. Rather than being a dead end, it prompted us to think more critically about imagery resolution, stream size, site conditions, and the factors that influence where and when BDAs are most effective. Those insights will help shape future monitoring and, ultimately, improve how restoration projects are evaluated and implemented.

Our beaver team also completed a jurisdictional scan of beaver relocation policy as part of a 2025/2026 Alberta beaver relocation pilot project. The pilot aims to navigate regulatory requirements, identify best practices, engage supportive communities, and ultimately relocate beavers to appropriate habitats. The jurisdictional scan includes a literature and policy review of beaver relocation/translocation practices from other jurisdictions to inform an appropriate approach for consideration in Alberta.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS:

Riparian Management Society, Freshwater Conservation Canada and Blood Tribe Land Management, and Environment and Climate Change Canada's Ecological Damages Fund, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Alberta Ecotrust Foundation



FISH ANALYSES AND MANUSCRIPTS WITH ALBERTA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION



One of the highlights of my year was collaborating with Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) on two research projects exploring native trout ecology and monitoring in Alberta's mountain streams. My role focused on statistical analyses and helping develop the manuscripts for publication. It's been rewarding to see the work progress from data analysis to scientific papers that contribute new evidence about native trout and their habitat.

The first study evaluated whether the standard reach length used for backpack electrofishing surveys is always necessary for detecting native trout and has been submitted to a journal for publication. The second study, still underway, examines how Westslope Cutthroat Trout abundances relate to stream temperature and fine sediment. Together, these projects will add to the growing body of knowledge on Alberta's at-risk native trout, with the goal of improving our understanding of their status and supporting their conservation.

What I enjoy most about this work is the opportunity to collaborate across organizations. Partnerships like the one with Alberta Conservation Association bring together complementary expertise, allowing us to approach complex ecological questions from multiple perspectives.

Working closely with fisheries biologists throughout the process—from data analysis to interpretation—helps ensure that the research is grounded in real-world context and contributes to a stronger scientific understanding of Alberta's native trout.



PHOTO BY J. BLACKBURN, ACA

WILDLIFE VEHICLE COLLISION BENEFIT COST ANALYSIS

Wildlife-vehicle collisions are costly — they put drivers at risk and take a toll on wildlife populations, yet their true societal cost is hard to pin down. One of the most rewarding projects I worked on this year was collaborating with the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Transit (BC MOTT) to develop a process for evaluating the costs and benefits of wildlife collision mitigation. Estimating that cost requires bringing together information from many different fields, including ecology, transportation, economics, and public safety.

My role involved compiling and evaluating the different methods used to estimate collision costs and analyzing the data needed to develop a composite cost for wildlife-vehicle collisions in British Columbia.

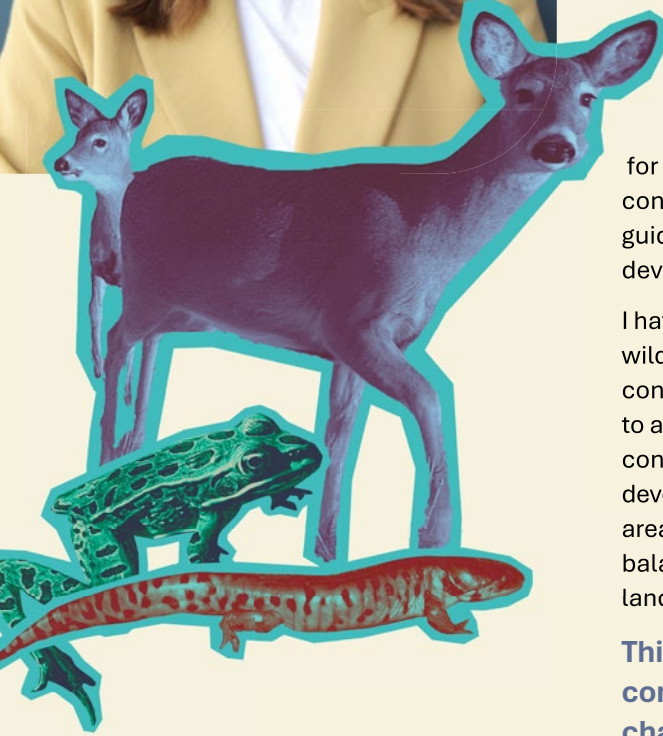
While the technical work was interesting, what stood out most to me was the collaborative nature of the project. There wasn't a single “right” answer or an established process to follow. Instead, the project relied on open discussions, shared expertise, and a willingness to explore different approaches to move towards an accepted process.

It's a great example of how good science often isn't just about analyzing data—it's about working together to ask the right questions, challenge assumptions, and develop practical solutions to complex conservation problems.





NATURE'S NETWORK



Through our Nature's Network project, Miistakis is working to better understand and support ecological connectivity across the greater Calgary region. Building on our wildlife camera monitoring and amphibian survey efforts, we have mapped an ecological network for the region, and are working to integrate maintaining ecological connectivity into local planning and decision-making. This work helps guide solutions that support both wildlife movement and sustainable development across the region.

I have been involved in this work since its beginning, when we first deployed wildlife cameras in Calgary parks in 2017. Since then, the project has continued to grow and evolve, expanding from documenting urban wildlife to addressing broader questions about how we can maintain ecological connectivity across the region. Most recently, I have been focused on developing guidelines to support amphibian connectivity in the greater Calgary area, with the goal of helping local planners, decision makers, and developers balance growth and development with the protection of the connected landscapes that amphibian populations and ecosystem health depend on.

This has been a rewarding project to be part of, as it has continually adapted to address emerging conservation challenges and fill important knowledge gaps.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS:

City of Calgary, Rocky View County, Weaselhead Glenmore Park Preservation Society, Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park, Alberta Forestry and Parks, Calgary Foundation, Alberta Ecotrust Foundation

Along the way, we have celebrated successes both big and small, from capturing adorable wildlife moments on camera, to securing multi-year funding that recognizes the importance and long-term commitment required for this work, to building meaningful partnerships and collaborations that strengthen outcomes. It has been inspiring to see how a project that began with a simple question about what wildlife lives in our urban landscapes has grown into a collaborative effort to better understand, protect, and restore ecological connectivity across the region.

AMPHIBIAN TUNNELS

Through our partnership with Mount Royal University, Miistakis supported undergraduate researcher Alexa Storozhiuk in exploring how amphibian tunnels under Highway 5 in Waterton Lakes National Park are being used by wildlife. These tunnels were originally designed to support long-toed salamander movement and reduce road mortality, but Alexa's work revealed that they provide important connectivity for a much broader community of species. Using specialized camera traps designed to detect ectotherms, Alexa monitored tunnel use and documented more than 20 species using these purpose-built crossing structures, including long-toed salamanders, boreal toads, wandering garter snakes, tiger salamanders, and a variety of small mammals. Alexa's findings demonstrates that conservation infrastructure built for one species can provide benefits for many others, and also provide valuable insights into how factors such as tunnel length, placement, and microhabitat conditions can influence wildlife use.

I had the opportunity to accompany Alexa while she deployed the remote cameras in beautiful Waterton Lakes National Park and supervised her work over the summer. She continued in the fall, mentored by Dr. Sara Smith, completing an independent research project and concluded with Alexa delivering an amazing final presentation.

This project was a great example Miistakis' commitment to applied conservation as well as to supporting undergraduate education.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS:

Dr. Sara Smith, Kim Pearson at
Waterton Lakes National Park,
TD Friends of the Environment
Foundation, Alberta Reptile
and Amphibian Society





ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY BY DESIGN: INTEGRATING CONNECTIVITY INTO PLANNING IN THE SQUAMISH VALLEY

When I joined the Miistakis team in January, I was fortunate to start work on this project as Squamish was poised to take next steps in integrating ecological connectivity into planning. The District of Squamish was beginning to renew its Official Community Plan, Nature Squamish was completing new ecological connectivity mapping, and the broader community wanted to make sure wildlife could move across and along the valley into the future.

Over five months, I worked closely with Nature Squamish's Wildlife Connectivity Project team to identify practical opportunities for implementing ecological connectivity at both the local and regional scale. The work involved looking at policies and commitments spanning everything from international biodiversity goals to provincial, regional, and local planning processes to find common opportunities to put connectivity into practice. It also meant navigating a landscape of overlapping jurisdictions, including the District of Squamish, the Squamish Nation, the Squamish Community Forest, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, and the Province of British Columbia. With recent agreements expanding the Squamish Nation's role in land use decision-making across much of its traditional territory, there is an exciting opportunity to strengthen the protection of culturally important species, harvesting areas, sacred places, and the connections between them.



At the end of May, we ran a workshop in Squamish, “Ecological Connectivity by Design”, that brought together representatives from governments, the Squamish Nation, non-profits, forestry, consulting, and other sectors. It was incredibly rewarding to facilitate this workshop (my first experience as lead facilitator), and to see the group’s enthusiasm for moving this work forward. The discussions reinforced that a lot of the groundwork has already been laid; the next steps are to build a collaborative approach to refine the mapping, identify priority wildlife corridors, and embed connectivity into planning and decision-making across the region. The workshop also helped refine our two final reports about connectivity modeling and integration of connectivity into planning in the region. These reports will be published and publicly accessible soon.

This project really captured what I love about conservation planning. It combined science, collaboration, and practical action while giving our team the chance to explore one of Canada’s most spectacular landscapes.

Hiking above the valley to see the places I’d looked at on maps for months helped us take a broader, landscape-level view, and reinforced why this work matters. I’m excited to see where the momentum and collaborations built through this project lead next.



PHOTO BY NIAL BELL

This year we celebrate three of our staff members
who have each dedicated more than 25 years to Miistakis.

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Tracy Lee, Ken Sanderson and Danah Duke

The Miistakis Institute proudly recognizes your
commitment to conservation!





Much has changed over the past quarter century, but our belief that lasting conservation happens through collaboration, science, and a willingness to work together remains constant.

For over 25 years we have had the right people around the table, finding practical solutions that benefit both nature and the communities that depend on it. We are privileged to be part of this team, and are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to Miistakis over the past 25 years and to those who will help shape our next chapter.



FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

March 31

	2026	2025
Assets		
Current		
Cash	\$ 439,867	\$ 576,149
Accounts receivable	172,268	87,283
Accrued project receivables	41,855	13,287
GST receivable	6,860	6,353
Prepaid expenses	5,408	1,108
	666,258	684,180
<i>Investments (Note 2)</i>	575,663	533,695
<i>Equipment (Note 3)</i>	21,531	16,566
	\$1,263,452	\$1,234,441
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 39,820	\$ 94,337
Wages payable	48,857	66,768
Deferred contributions related to operations (Note 4)	244,117	228,808
	332,794	389,913
<i>Deferred contribution related to equipment (Note 5)</i>	174	228
	332,968	390,141
Net assets		
Invested in equipment	21,357	16,339
Internally restricted (Note 6)	380,000	380,000
Unrestricted	529,127	447,961
	930,484	844,300
	\$1,263,452	\$1,234,441

For full audited statements please see the Miistakis website.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the year ended March 31

	2026	2025
Revenue		
Government grants	\$ 434,872	\$ 650,433
Foundation and other grants	524,604	524,318
Services	274,669	127,281
Donations	51,413	53,591
Endowment income (Note 7)	3,934	1,251
Events	–	500
	1,289,492	1,357,374
Expenditures		
Wages and benefits	733,868	689,749
Subcontract	237,644	503,829
Supplies	142,197	85,108
Professional fees	46,922	42,944
Travel	27,262	28,569
Rent	12,000	12,150
Software	14,700	12,017
Workshop	22,607	9,900
Insurance	8,379	7,958
Amortization	6,638	6,070
Telephone and utilities	1,046	1,269
Advertising and promotion	171	199
Interest and bank charges	185	105
	1,253,619	1,399,867
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures before undernoted items	35,873	(42,493)
Other income		
Gain on investments	18,883	26,674
Unrealized (loss) gain on investment	19,690	18,008
Interest	2,597	14,058
Dividend income	9,141	11,104
	50,311	69,844
Excess of revenue over expenditures for the year	\$ 86,184	\$ 27,351

For full audited statements please see the Miistakis website.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

For the year ended March 31

	Invested in equipment	Internally restricted	Unrestricted	Total 2026	Total 2025
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 16,339	\$ 380,000	\$ 447,961	\$ 844,300	\$ 816,949
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year	(6,585)	–	92,769	86,184	27,351
Purchase of equipment	11,603	–	(11,603)	–	–
Balance, end of year	\$ 21,357	\$ 380,000	\$ 529,127	\$ 930,484	\$ 844,300

For full audited statements please see the Miistakis website.



miistakis institute
APPLIED CONSERVATION RESEARCH



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ROCKIES.CA



**Ecological Connectivity
Biodiversity
Nature-based Solutions**



PHOTOS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF:

TONY LEPRIEUR

Bear (pages 6, 25); Moose (page 16); Beaver (pages 16, 24);
Owl (page 25); Woodpecker (page 25)

KRIS KENDELL

Tiger Salamander (page 20);
Frog (page 24)

PAUL JONES

Butterfly (page 24);
Pronghorn (page 25)