

ANNUAL REPORT

to the community

2024



Alberta
Emerald
Foundation

Accelerating Environmental Excellence

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OUR 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lee Funke
Board Chair

Mark Brostrom
Past Chair

Alex Sabharwal
Treasurer

Trina Innes
Governance Chair

John Parkins
Resource
Development Chair

Jen Silverthorn
Communications &
Engagement Chair

Debbie Rheinstein

Cam Lane

Che-Wei Chung

Patrick Jones

Christine Hornung

Anna Kauffman



To our friends and supporters

On behalf of The Alberta Emerald Foundation's Board of Directors, I am pleased to present our 2024 Annual Report to the community.

This year was one of growth and stability. Four years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation has regained a sense of stability, both financially and operationally. Through the steadfast dedication of our Board and small but mighty staff of two, we have achieved so much in the last year. We have strengthened existing relationships with our sponsors and developed new partnerships, allowing us to elevate our programming. With these steps, we've set the Annual Emerald Awards on an upward trajectory, experiencing an increase in nominations from across the province, especially in areas outside the major centres of Calgary and Edmonton. The list of accomplishments doesn't stop there, as AEF staff have been working tirelessly to achieve our mission of accelerating environmental excellence across Alberta.

Of course, these successes wouldn't be possible without the generous support of our funding partners, for which we are incredibly grateful. Together, we are building a more resilient and sustainable future for Alberta.

This year marks my last as Board Chair with the AEF. It has been an honour to serve in this role alongside my fellow board members, contributing to an organization in which I deeply believe. After nearly 34 serving the AEF in various capacities, my commitment does not end here, as I will remain on the board. I am delighted to pass the torch to Trina Innes, Executive Director of Sustainability Services at Alberta Municipalities who will lead our organization for the next three years. I know that our amazing community of stakeholders will show their support for Trina and the Board for yet another incredible year ahead and continue our path of growth and success.

Lee Funke
Founder and CEO
Big Picture Public Affairs





What a Remarkable Year for Environmental Excellence!

2024 has been an inspiring year for us at the Alberta Emerald Foundation. As a small but dedicated team of two, we are incredibly proud of the work we do and feel privileged to witness Alberta's environmental innovation and excellence firsthand. Meeting the finalists and recipients of the Emerald Awards and seeing their extraordinary initiatives up close is truly awe-inspiring.

This year, we had the honor of showcasing over 30 remarkable stories of environmental excellence through the Emerald Awards, our Emerald Documentary Series, and the What On EARTH Can We Do? podcast. These stories reached more than 200,000 people, shining a spotlight on the impactful work happening across our province.

As we look ahead to 2025, we're excited to share even more inspiring stories, celebrate new achievements, and continue advancing environmental excellence throughout Alberta. With your support, we can inspire all Albertans to champion environmental progress in their communities, workplaces, and daily lives.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us!

With gratitude,

Marisa Orfei & Sabrina Huot

STAFF

Marisa Orfei

Executive Director



Sabrina Huot

Communications & Engagement Specialist



MISSION

We accelerate environmental excellence by identifying and celebrating Alberta's visionary leaders and sharing best practices through the power of compelling educational narratives

VISION

A future where all Albertans advance environmental excellence where they live, work, and play

VALUES

- **Influence:** Promoting environmental leadership and engaging the next generation of environmental leaders
- **Integrity:** Remaining a trusted and respected platform for environmental excellence
- **Community:** Sustaining success together by amplifying collaborative impact
- **Diversity & Inclusion:** Embracing inclusivity, respecting diverse perspectives

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

2024 marked another successful year of accelerating environmental excellence across Alberta through our various programs and promotional efforts. Here's our impact at a glance...

We showcased examples of Alberta's environmental excellence through our year-round marketing and outreach efforts, reaching over

200,000

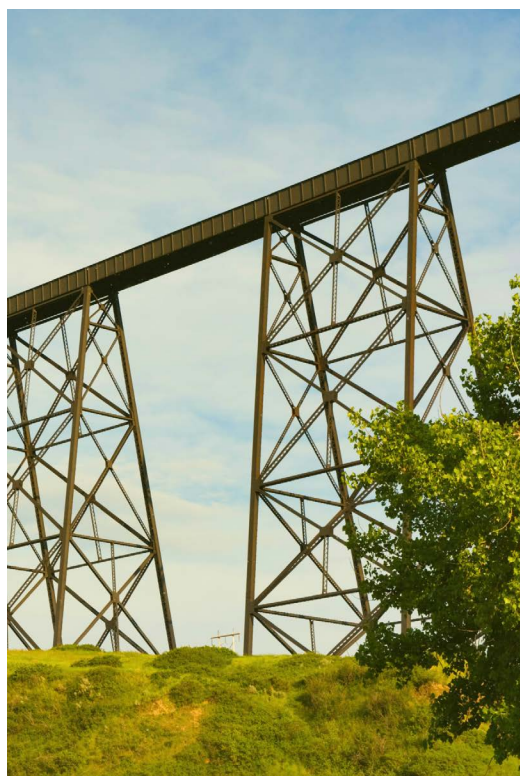
people, inspiring a culture of stewardship across the province

This year we welcomed 13 recipients and 20 finalists to the Emerald Award alumni, adding to the nearly

1,200

Albertans that we've recognized since 1992, adding to the legacy of Alberta as an environmental leader and innovator

As a part of our strategic planning activities for 2024, we asked our community "What impact do you think the AEF has on Albertans and the province?" Here's what they had to say...



“ AEF has created its own energy for organizations, individuals and industry by recognizing the important work that's being done in Alberta and inspiring everyone to follow suit

The impact is tremendous. The breadth of stories and the longevity of the foundation are invaluable. I think they give us a road-map, they remind us of what is possible and they make me hopeful ”

“ AEF is a small clear voice reminding Albertans that there are positive environmental actions occurring across all sectors

33RD ANNUAL EMERALD AWARDS



On June 6, 2024, we hosted the 33rd Annual Emerald Awards at the Calgary Central Library to celebrate and recognize the environmental achievements of the Emerald Award shortlist.

We were joined by numerous special guests including host Julian Faid, Indigenous artist Mackenzie Brown, Calgary Councillor Peter Demong, Deputy Minister of Environment and Protected Areas, Sherri Wilson, among many other municipal government officials from across the province.

210 people attended the awards in person and 340 people tuned in online through our live-stream video.

33 Shortlisted groups

15 Municipalities represented

13 Recipients

The Emerald Awards are a testament for proud Albertans. It's further proof that we're making a difference where it matters ”

“ By going to these awards you get to see how many people are working for a better more sustainable future. It's inspiring and makes me proud to be Albertan



THE WHAT ON EARTH CAN WE DO? PODCAST



This seasonal podcast, hosted by the AEF's own Sabrina Huot, explores innovative environmental projects and passionate people shaping a resilient and sustainable future for Alberta. Each episode dives into real-world stories of individuals and organizations tackling environmental challenges, offering listeners inspiration, practical insights, and real solutions to create a positive impact.

Season 5

This season featured eight episodes with expert guests from across the province! We covered a wide range of topics, from tire recycling to the journey toward rewilding Canada.

Episode Highlight



Season 5 Episode 7

Building Houses with Recycled Plastic Bottles

In this episode, we chat with Kelly Rogers from Lloydminster-based EcoPlast Solutions about how they're revolutionizing the construction industry by building homes from recycled plastic bottles. This inspiring discussion dives into the intersection of sustainability and construction, and the limitless potential for a greener, more resilient world.

Engagement

684

downloads

Listeners tuned in from...

23

countries



THE EMERALD DOCUMENTARY SERIES

Featuring compelling micro-documentaries, the Emerald Documentary Series provides a glimpse into the award-winning initiatives of Emerald Award recipients. These documentaries share the story behind their award-winning work; how it came to be, why it's so important, and how it impacts Albertans. By producing and sharing these micro docs, we're helping to educate the provincial community and shift the perception of Alberta on a local, national and global scale.

Season 5

Season five of the Emerald Documentary Series dives into the stories of the 32nd Annual Emerald Award recipients.

27,120
views

Here's a glimpse into the stories we shared this season...



Blindman Brewing's First-in-Canada Carbon Capture Solution

Learn more about Blindman Brewing's innovative carbon capture technology. Not only does it help to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, it also saves them money!



Preserving Nature with AWN's Caribou Patrol Program

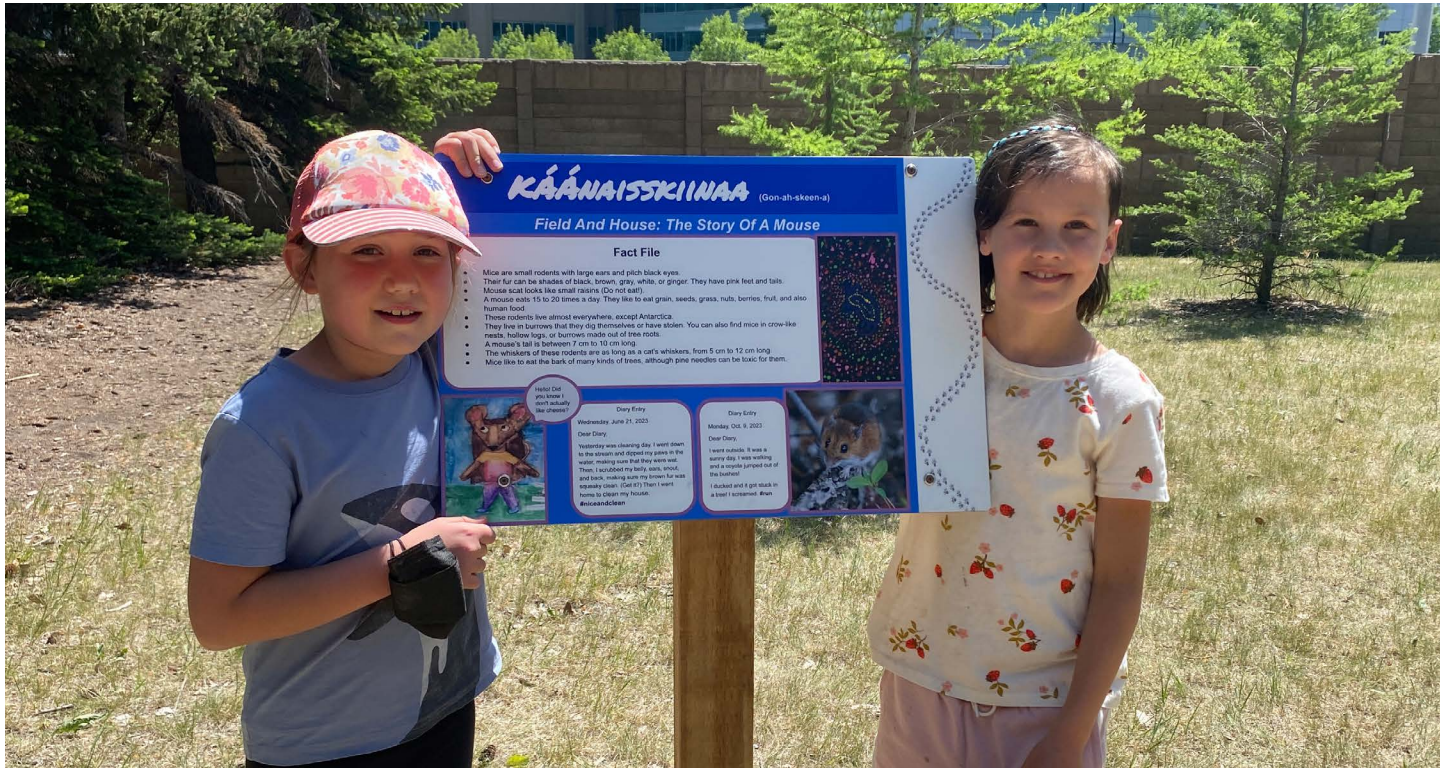
Discover how The Aseniwuche Winewak Nation's Caribou Patrol Program is working to protect Caribou along Highway 40.



Harvesting Hope and Building Community for a Brighter Future

Dig into how Highfield Regenerative Farm is revolutionizing urban agriculture by transitioning a once-overgrown brownfield into a vibrant farm.

EMERALD YOUTH GRANTS



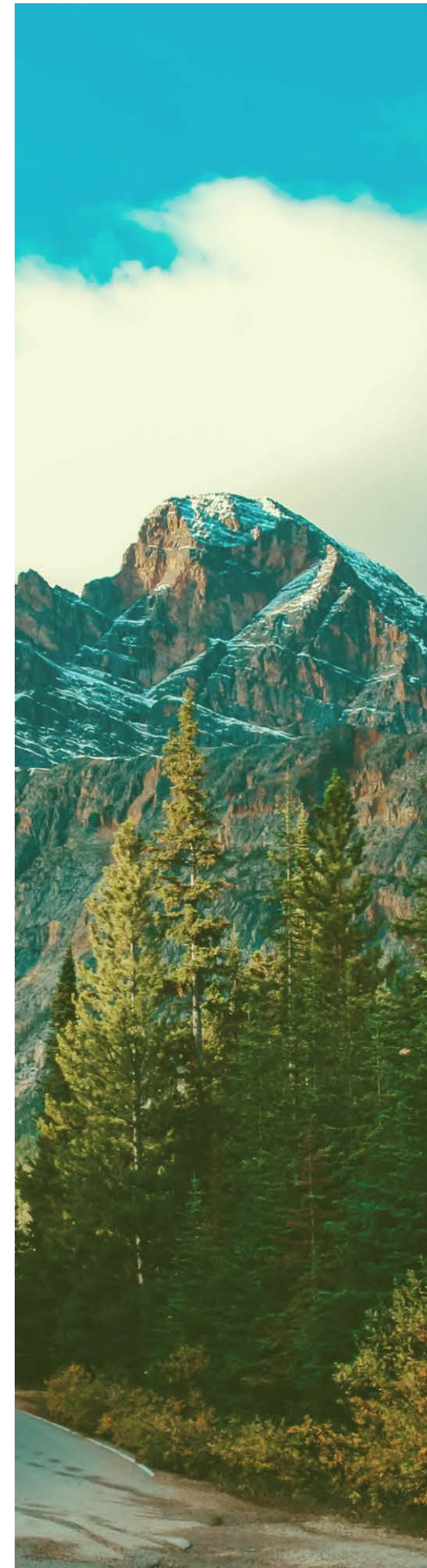
The Emerald Youth Grant program empowers youth aged 5-25 across Alberta to take on environmental projects that inspire change and foster environmental stewardship

For the first time since the Emerald Youth Grants started in 2009, we had to pause the program due to the loss of its long-term funder. While the program was on pause AEF staff began the search for a new funding partner for this vital community resource. We're happy to report that as of January 2025 the program has received funding for the year from Pathways Alliance!

Hear from a previous EYG recipient on what the program means to them...



We have been the successful recipients of the Emerald Youth Grant several times. The funding this provides for our students means so much to my school community. This provides our students with extra experiences we would otherwise not be able to afford to offer them.



OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Inside Education's Regenerate Conference

On March 9, 2024 our Communications & Engagement Specialist, Sabrina, joined Inside Education's 13th Annual Youth summit as an expert guest. Together with Alberta Forest Product Association's Aspen Dudzic, Sabrina participated in a panel discussion about all things environmental communication, with a special focus on communicating science ideas through podcasting.



Attending the Regenerate Conference as an expert guest was such a wonderful experience! I was so impressed with the level of engagement and insightful questions from the nearly 50 students who attended our back-to-back sessions!

The Emerald Award Trophy

In 2024 we welcomed back the Emerald Award Trophy! In addition to being awarded a trophy, recipients received a \$1,500 grant, striking a balance between honoring past traditions and supporting future efforts.

Created by Calgary small business, ChopValue YYC, the 33rd Annual Emerald Award trophy was designed with sustainability top of mind. Using recycled chopsticks from local restaurants, each trophy diverted 680 chopsticks from landfills and stores 33 kg of Carbon Dioxide!

OUR FUNDING PARTNERS

We wouldn't be able to accelerate environmental excellence across Alberta without the support of our partners. We're incredibly grateful for their support and for their own commitment to reaching their climate and environmental goals.

Platinum



Gold



Silver

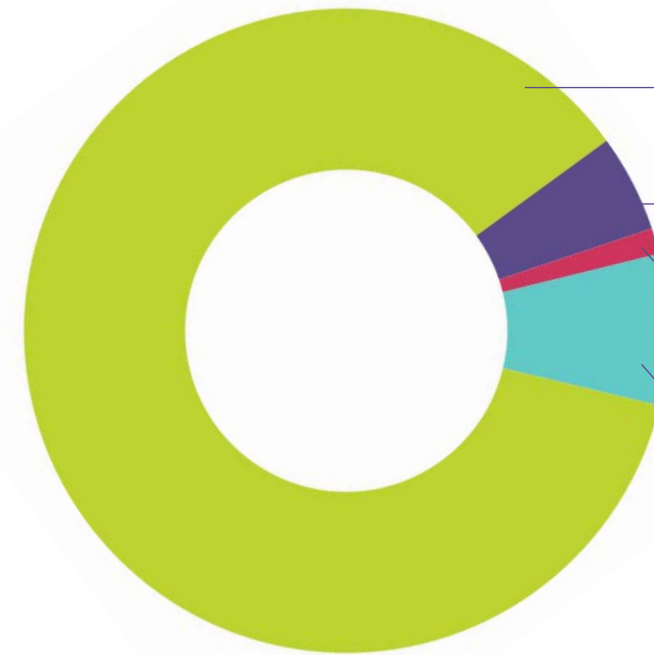


Bronze



REVENUE

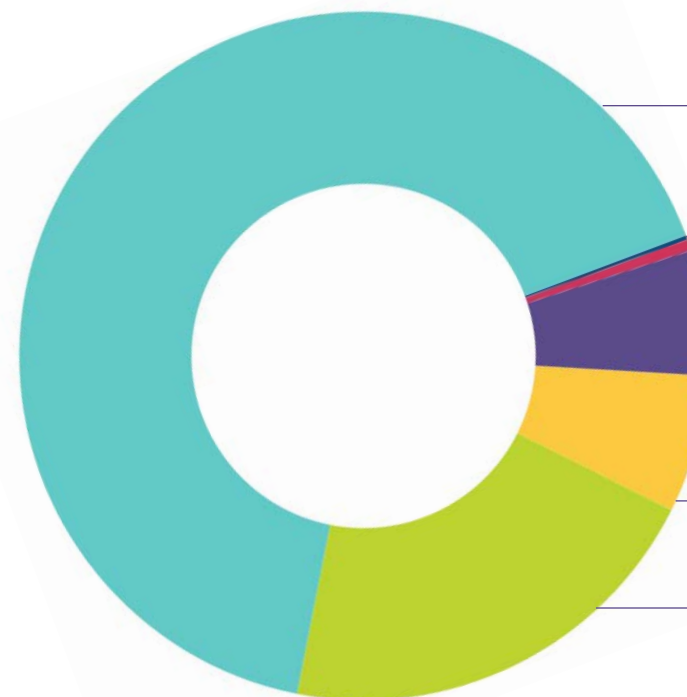
\$362,393



- Sponsorship
86.23%
- Donations
4.89%
- Event ticket sales
1.30%
- Investment income
7.58%

EXPENDITURES

\$281,806



- HR and Direct Program Delivery
66.19%
- Advertising
0.21%
- Travel
0.53%
- Administration
5.88%
- Grants Distributed
6.48%
- Non-HR Program Delivery
20.71%

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE AEF?



As we enter a new year, we're more determined than ever to continue on our upward trajectory of growth toward accelerating environmental excellence across Alberta.

We're a province filled with innovation, leadership, and passion for building a more sustainable and resilient future and we're here to bring those stories into the spotlight. To help us improve the reach of these stories across Alberta and beyond, we aim to increase, adapt, and improve our promotional and outreach efforts in the coming year. This is a vital tactic in helping achieve our mission, as we need to ensure we're reaching a diverse audience and not just those who are already engaged in environmental matters.

We can't wait to see what the next year has in store and for all of the incredible stories we'll have the privilege to share. Together with our community of change makers we can create a future where all Albertans advance environmental excellence where they live, work, and play.



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The Alberta Emerald Foundation is a registered charity
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