2024



Alberta Recreation & Parks Association (ARPA)

ANNUAL REPORT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Land Acknowledgement	
Year at a Glance	3
President's Report	4
Board Members & Staff	5
Partners & Committees	6
Reconciliation	7
Programs	8
Communities ChooseWell	8
HIGH FIVE® & ARPA Community of Practice	9
Communities in Bloom Alberta	10
June is Recreation and Parks Month (JRPM)	10
Community Compass	11
Events	12
Financials & Audit	14
Treasurer's Report	14
Summarized Statement of Financial Operations	15
Summarized Statement of Financial Position	16

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ARPA would like to acknowledge the First Nations, the Métis, the Inuit and all of the people across Alberta who share a history and a deep connection with this land. We dedicate ourselves to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.



YEAR AT A GLANCE

September 2023 - September 2024

Our Reach



1324 Municipal

Members



33 Individual Members



1/UBusiness
Members



Non-Profit Group Members



Educational Institution & Student Members

Our Vision

Albertans recognize recreation and parks as essential for enhancing the wellbeing of individuals, communities and our natural and built environments.

Our Purpose

To collaboratively support our members and partners to (re)create healthy citizens, communities and environments, enhancing the wellbeing of all Albertans.

Events



6

Events Hosted

- 2023 ARPA Conference & Energize Workshop | Lake Louise, AB
- 2024 Alberta Healthy Communities Symposium | Edmonton, AB
- 2024 Parks Forum | Canmore, AB
- 2024 Leaders Summit | Kananaskis, AB
- 2024 YDRS Symposium | Water Valley, AB
- 2024 Elders' Capacity Building Culture Camp | Cochrane, AB



<u>971</u>

Iotal Attendees

We recognized the hard work of individuals, communities, and organizations by.....

Awarding

6

ARPA Awards

Awarding

3

Scholarships for a total of \$5,000

Awarding

3

Lieutenant Governors Awards ARPA gratefully acknowledges our funding partner, the Government of Alberta.





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has now been 35 amazingly rewarding years that I have volunteered with ARPA, and this year has been no exception. Thanks to the dedication and contributions of our members, partners, sponsors, volunteers and staff, ARPA continues to be a relevant, responsive and respected leader in the recreation and parks sector. Along with the continued delivery of existing events and programs, we can also shine the light on some highlights from this past year.



Community Compass program – this three-year program received funding from the *Ministry of Alberta Jobs, Economy and Trade* and launched in 2023. The key outcomes of this program are to raise awareness about career opportunities in the recreation and parks sector, support job seekers by showing pathways to employment, and help the sector foster a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive workforce.

Advocacy development – the ARPA Board of Directors made an intentional commitment to becoming more active and organized with our advocacy efforts. We engaged with a government relations firm and have developed an advocacy plan aimed at amplifying the voice and potential of recreation and parks with decision makers in Alberta. This has assisted us in being clear about our key messages, contributions and opportunities to influence effectively.

Strategic directions – the ARPA Board engaged in a process to update our Strategic Plan and directions. This included an online survey for our members and partners to provide input and we were ecstatic with the amount of input we received, demonstrating again how committed and engaged our members and partners are in the industry. We are excited to share these updated directions at this year's Annual General Meeting.

Walking With Indigenous Communities: ARPA's Action Map – we formally launched the Action Map at last year's Conference by way of a traditional Pipe Ceremony led by Blackfoot Elder and Traditional Knowledge Keeper, Dr. Clarence Wolfleg, and we have continued to use this tool to further assist ARPA on its reconciliation journey. This tool demonstrates not only our commitment to our journey, but also provides our members with examples and resources to support others on their journey as well.

Membership Portal – many of you will have experienced our newest membership portal. This online resource will allow you to connect with other ARPA members, register for ARPA events and track your professional development. We will be continuing to share how you can use the portal to access increased membership benefits. This portal supports efficiencies of our operations and enhances the value to our members and partners.

We continue to have a strong relationship with several Ministries within the provincial government, including our work with the *Ministry of Alberta Tourism and Sport* on priorities related to municipal recreation and parks development and the *Ministry of Alberta Health* on our Communities ChooseWell program.

The past year has also been very difficult on some of our member communities, thinking especially about those who were challenged and devastated by fire and extreme weather events. These events impact our communities in so many ways, and often it is the recreation/parks staff and volunteers in those communities who are operating or supporting evacuation centers and offering safe spaces for people to re-connect and re-create their communities. Thank you to all who have, and continue to, provide support to those communities and individuals.

Looking forward to 2025, I am excited to see the results of the programs and efforts undertaken in 2024 and to continue to advocate to our elected officials and partners the undeniable value of recreation and parks places, spaces and programs to our communities and this province.

Sincerely,

Deb Comfort, ARPA President



BOARD MEMBERS

Deb Comfort

ARPA President

Katie Biberdorf

VP External

Jason Simituk

VP Internal

Graham Jones

Tresasurer

Heather Cowie

Past President

Vacant

Region 1 Member (North)

Travis Kennedy

Region 2 Member (Central)

Jarret Hoebers

Region 3 Member (South)

Colton Meronyk

Student Representative

Nicole Fraser Staci Lattimer

Suzanne Lobb Kyle McCallum

Ryan Poole

Directors at Large

STAFF

Steve Allan

Executive Director

Julie Venner

Communications & Marketing Manager

Jagdeep Kundi

Community Compass Industry Connections Coordinator

Mackenzie Golden

Communities ChooseWell, Program Officer, Impact & Events **Janet Naclia**

Director of People & Programs

Breanna Morin

Communications & Marketing Coordinator

Matt Leung

Communities ChooseWell, Program Manager

Kayla MacIntosh

Communities ChooseWell, Program Officer, Engagement & Storytelling **Lori Simmonds**

Administrative Coordinator

Patrick MacQuarrie

Community Compass Program Manager

Maddison Drader

Communities ChooseWell, Program Officer, Education & Allyship

CJ Blye

Special Projects Coordinator Jen Goeres

HIGH FIVE ® Coordinator

Caleb Boorse

Education & Events Manager

Callie Woodley

Community Compass Program Coordinator

Emilia Grindlay

Communities ChooseWell, Program Officer, Healthy Eating & Partnerships

Sharon Miller

Communities in Bloom Provincial Coordinator



PARTNERS & COMMITTEES

We continue to build relationships with other associations and institutions with shared goals.

We have formal partnerships with the following organizations:

Associations:

- + Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (ALACD)
- + Alberta Association of Agriculture Societies (AAAS)
- + Alberta Association of Recreation Facilities Personnel (AARFP)
- + Alberta Municipalities
- + Alberta Sport Leadership Association
- + Alberta TrailNet
- + Alberta Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA)
- + Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA)
- + Ever Active Schools
- + Recreation for Life Foundation (RFLF)
- Rural Municipalities of Alberta Association (RMA)
- + Siksika Health Services

Post Secondary Institutions:

- + Mount Royal University; Faculty of Health, Community and Education
- + Olds College
- University of Alberta; Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation (KSR)
- + University of Alberta; Centre for Healthy Communities
- University of Calgary; School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape
- + University of Calgary; Werklund School of Education

Government:

- + Government of Canada
- + Province of Alberta; Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women
- + Province of Alberta; Ministry of Forestry and Parks
- + Province of Alberta; Ministry of Health
- + Province of Alberta; Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Trade
- + Province of Alberta; Ministry of Tourism and Sport

We also have additional working relationships with:

- + Active Alberta Coalition
- + Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention
- + Calgary Foundation
- + Canadian Red Cross
- + Ever Active Schools
- + Indigenous Sport Council of Alberta
- + Mahegun Tails Inc.
- + Miskanawah
- Prescription to Get Active
- United Way Calgary

Committees, networks & task groups:

- + Education and Professional Development Committee
 Chair: Deb Comfort
- + ARPA Community of Practice Chair: Jen Goeres
- + Parks & Open Space Committee Network

 Chair: Doug Evans & Erin Pickard
- + Awards and Scholarships Committee Chair: Barb McKee & Glenn Jensen



RECONCILIATION



Walking With Indigenous Communities: ARPA's Action Map

In October 2023 at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, ARPA Board of Directors and Staff came together with Indigenous Elders and partners to both acknowledge and celebrate the <u>Walking With Indigenous Communities (WWIC): ARPA's Action Map</u>. The WWIC: ARPA's Action Map was made an official organizational document by way of a traditional Pipe Ceremony led by Blackfoot Elder and Traditional Knowledge Keeper, Dr. Clarence Wolfleg.

This action map identifies 10 key actions that will guide ARPA's reconciliation work so that we can move forward together in a good way with Indigenous Elders and communities. Our deepest thanks goes out to Elders Darryl Brass, Edmee Comstock, Dr. Reg and Dr. Rose Crowshoe, Alice Kaquitts, Diane Meguinis, and Dr. Clarence Wolfleg for their guidance on this important initiative.

Elders' Camp Documentary: Our Own Spirits Regained

Also in 2023, ARPA debuted the <u>Elders' Camp Documentary: Our Own Spirits Regained</u>. This inspiring film shares the stories of various multi-nation Elders as they explore the importance of ARPA's camps for growing the capacity of Elders, the healing process of connecting to the land, and the power of recreation to lift the human spirit.

We kindly thank director, Sandy Hoekstra and her team, for capturing the essence of the Elders' Camp in a way that truly honours the voices and stories of Indigenous Elders featured within it. This documentary won an award for the 'Best Story in the Short Doc' Category at the 2024 Okanagan Screen Awards. It was also featured at the 2023 Regina International Film Festival as well as at the 2023 World Leisure Congress in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Historic 10th Grandmothers' Circle

In honour and celebration of National Day for Truth & Reconciliation / Orange Shirt Day and **a key milestone of 2024** was hosting the historic **10th Grandmothers' Circle: Honouring Wisdom** - a series that first began in 2020. Sponsored by Communities Choosewell and Alberta Blue Cross, this circle invited Indigenous women Elders to come together again to share their unique perspectives on fostering wellness. By using the theme **"Honoring Wisdom"** to guide their conversation, this circle acknowledged the importance of intergenerational teachings in fostering community wellbeing and resilience.

Ongoing Activities

As with past years, we continue to honour Indigenous voices and practices by highlighting them in our activities, events, and programming. This included the continuation of the **Elders' Capacity Building Culture Camp**, the **first-ever opening Elder Keynote** at the 2023 ARPA Conference & Energize Workshop, and our ongoing support of the Elders Knowledge Circle Society as they transition into an independent non-profit organization.

Thank you to our funders for:

The Reconciliation Stream at the 2023 ARPA Conference & Energize Workshop





The 2024 Elders' Capacity Building Culture Camp

POWERED BY









PROGRAMS

Communities ChooseWell

<u>Communities ChooseWell</u> is a program that inspires healthy living champions across Alberta to transform their communities into places where eating well and being active are easy choices for everyone. The partnership between ARPA and our funder, the *Ministry of Alberta Health*, demonstrates the joint commitment by the recreation and health sectors to improving the health and wellbeing of Albertans and their communities.



Who We Reached





311 Unique Communitie



394
Champions working with Indigenous populations



IUZ Indigenous Communities



Alberta Healthy Communities
Symposium Delegates

We Celebrated the Hard Work of Communities by...



Recognizing

7Champions with
ChooseWell Awards



Distributing

\$36,287 through our Healthy Community Seed Grants .

Key Successes





Community Stories Night Market

According to our 2023 Annual Champion Survey...

81%

of champions found new learning opporunities through ChooseWell

76%

of champions improved their knowledge of community, healthy eating, active living and/ or allyship through ChooseWell

72%

of champions planned or implemented healthy eating/ active living actions



HIGH FIVE®

ARPA is proud to be the provincial provider of Parks and Recreation Ontario's HIGH FIVE® program, Canada's only Quality Assurance Program for recreation and sport programs for children aged 4-12 and more recently, older adults.

HIGH FIVE® provides a range of training, assessment tools and resources to ensure that organizations deliver the highest quality programs possible.

With the support of our amazing HIGH FIVE® Trainers, volunteers with the ARPA HIGH FIVE® Task Force, and organizations across Alberta dedicated to providing quality sport and recreation opportunities, APRA was proud to provide **92 HIGH FIVE® training opportunities** to learners across Alberta.









New Trainers



26Registered Organizations

ARPA Community of Practice (CoP)

The Community of Practice is a volunteer group of professionals who are interested in advancing the vision, mission and strategic goals of ARPA. Thank you to **our Chair:** Jen Goeres.

Accomplishments:

- + Hosted the ARPA Summer Camp Collective which saw 124 members from across Alberta
- + Held virtual meetings quarterly
- + Brought together recreation professionals working in early childhood to older adult programming at a community of practice
- + Hosted the ARPA Community of Practice which saw 92 members from across Alberta
- + Thank you to our HIGH FIVE® Trainer Exchange Committee: Amy Erlandson, Jen Goeres, Tracy Morgan, Carla Nikli, Carlee Schaefer and Julia Soucie



Communities In Bloom

People, Plants & Pride...Growing Together!

After 17 years of coordinating the provincial program for Communities in Bloom in Alberta, the ARPA Board of Directors made the decision to transfer the responsibilities for the program coordination onto another non-profit organization to bring some new energy into the program.

The program transition took place this year with Sharon Miller taking over coordination duties from long-time (now former) provincial coordinator, Karen Snethun. Sharon developed a new society, the Communities in Bloom Alberta Society, and brought together an energized Board of Directors to take over leadership of the provincial program.

The program continues to be strong here in Alberta and across the country. The 2024 provincial program had 15 communities participate with 9 volunteer judges.

ARPA has been fortunate to help coordinate such a wonderful program that saw over 100 Alberta communities participate during our involvement. These communities participated by enhancing and sustaining the visual appeal of their neighbourhoods, parks, and public spaces – all while building community, economic development, and civic pride.

We want to sincerely thank all of the communities, volunteers, sponsors and partners who have been a part of and supported the program over the past 17 years. ARPA will continue to help the provincial and national programs grow and have a community development impact into the future.





June is Recreation & Parks Month (JRPM)

At ARPA, we recognize the month of June as "June is Recreation & Parks Month" (JRPM). JRPM highlights the many benefits that recreation and parks bring to our communities, and acknowledges the strong foundation of parks and recreation spaces, facilities & programs in Alberta.

This year, JRPM focused on four weekly themes: Love Your Parks & Green Spaces, Connect with the Land, Inclusive Recreation, and Explore Your Community. We held an online photo contest that allowed participants to share their photos of how they celebrated JRPM using the hashtag **#CelebrateJRPM** in order to be entered for a chance to win our grand prize.

June is also recognized as *National Indigenous History Month*, and *Pride Month*. In our efforts to tie together JRPM, NIHM, and Pride month we featured local events on our website and promoted **ARPA's Elders' Camp Documentary: Our Own Spirits Regained** in honour of *National Indigenous Peoples' Day* on June 21st.





14,484

Impressions on social media



Community Compass

Growing Futures in Recreation and Parks

Introducing <u>Community Compass</u>, ARPA's workforce initiative, funded by the *Ministry of Jobs, the Economy, and Trade*.

Community Compass is redefining what it means to work in recreation. We're helping equity-deserving communities carve their own paths. Paths that lead not only to exciting, sustainable, and impactful careers, but also to new skills, meaningful connections, and unexpected opportunities.



And, we're helping employers create more equitable, diverse and inclusive hiring practices and workplaces. Every day, we're collaborating with our industry, community and Indigenous partners to share valuable resources, expertise and support.

We're challenging assumptions, reducing barriers, and building bridges into the recreation and parks sector. Because it's a sector full of potential. A sector where interests connect with opportunity, and active curiosity becomes employability.

Events Held | Inclusive Webinar Series

The Inclusive Webinar Series provided the opportunity to hear from experts and individuals with lived experience related to creating safe workplaces for individuals from various equity deserving groups. We are grateful to the **Centre for Sexuality** and the **Sinneave Family Foundation** for partnering with us on these webinars:

- Creating a Culture of Respect for Gender & Sexual Diversity
- Neurodiversity in the Workplace: 6 Principles for Inclusion
- Neuroinclusion and the Employee Lifecycle



J Webinars Held



130 Individual Attendees



34Organizations
Reached

Key Resources Developed:







Post Secondary Guide



Indigenous Employment Guide

Key Successes:

- Launched a Career Awareness Marketing Campaign:
 Showcased individuals working in the recreation & parks sector to highlight our sector as a viable career option.
- Welcomed a New Team Member:
 Jagdeep Kundi joined the Community Compass team as the Industry Connections Coordinator.
- Engaged in Community Outreach:
 Our team attended 6 career and community events, engaging with 844 attendees.



EVENTS

ARPA 2023 Conference & Energize Workshop

The 2023 ARPA Conference & Energize Workshop took place in Lake Louise at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise. With the theme "Inspiring Creativity and Community" the conference hosted over 500 professionals interested in making a positive impact on their community. The education program covered the diversity of the recreation and parks sector in recreation programming, parks and open spaces, environmental stewardship, or cultural and artistic programs.



Notably, ARPA was thrilled and honoured to open the 2023 ARPA Annual Conference & Energize Workshop with a panel of esteemed Elders from Indigenous communities across Alberta. Marking a historical moment in ARPA's reconciliation journey, this circle featured 8 multi-nation Elders from the Treaty 7 area and was the first time in ARPA history to open the Conference with Indigenous speakers.















2024 Leaders Summit

The 2024 Leaders Summit took place at the Kananaskis Mountain Lodge and fostered the discussion of various multifaceted issues in the field of parks and recreation. Designed for senior municipal leaders, this event provided delegates the opportunity to indulge in discussion, workshops and peer learning.





Delegates



Speakers



Number of Days

Number of **Sponsors**

2024 Youth Development Through Recreation Services (YDRS)

The Youth Development Through Recreation Services (YDRS) Symposium is an annual forum for advancing the knowledge about the contributions of recreation programs and services. It aims to provide information about children and youth development by promoting the delivery and expansion of positive development through sport, recreation, physical activity, education and general health promotion.

The 2024 YDRS Symposium held at **Camp Kindle, Alberta**, attracted delegates from municipal recreation, community service departments, not for profit groups, community sports groups, public health, educational institutions and social service organizations from all over the province. This educational opportunity provided delegates with the opportunity to:

- + Learn first hand about child and youth development and its application in recreation;
- + Hear from colleagues and peers through focused and themed presentations;
- Enjoy networking opportunities and return home with practical and applicable resources.

Thank you to the YDRS Steering Committee: Jen Alexander, Dillon Cosgrove, Katrina Epp, Jen Goeres (ARPA staff), Megan Hinds, Matt Leung (ARPA staff), Tracy Morgan, Carlee Schaefer, Jodi Smith, and Julia Soucie.



66

Total Delegates

Testimonials:

"My first time, and I wish I could attend every year - it has rekindled my desire to make a difference."

"YDRS is always my favourite conference - there are always so many incredible sessions, presenters, and delegates. Being around this group of people every year reinvigorates my passion for delivering Youth recreation programming. So many special people in this sector and our province."



2024 Parks Forum

The 2024 Parks Forum included opportunities for park professionals and researchers to connect, learn, and develop their skills. The event took place on **March 21-23**, **2024 in Canmore**, **Alberta** at the Coast Hotel and Conference Centre.

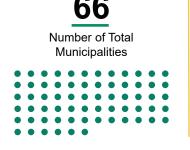
The event welcomed keynote speakers, education sessions, and opportunities for networking, collaboration, and facilitated discussions focused on how our park systems can be solutions and provide diverse ways to serve and support communities.







33 Speakers



Number of Days

Number of Sponsors / Exhibitors

FINANCIALS & AUDIT

Treasurer's Report (2023 Fiscal)

The 2023 fiscal year brought some financial stability with it after a few years of uncertainty of revenues. With two multi-year grants in place (Communities ChooseWell and Community Compass) and the return of several educational events, ARPA was able to have a revenue positive year and be able to undertake some fiscal planning into the future.

With an excess of revenues over expenses of \$69,292 from a year with total revenues of \$2,869,535 it was a financially successful year.

Here are some of the highlights and impacts for the 2023 fiscal year:

- The start of multi-year grants for the Communities ChooseWell and Community Compass programs
- Continued support and collaboration with the *Ministry of Tourism and Sport* including the continuation of our organizational grant, regional recreation meetings, the Alberta Recreation Survey and the Energize program
- · The continued growth of our educational events
- Our Walking with Indigenous Communities work including the Elders' Capacity Building Culture Camp and the Elders' Knowledge Circle governance

From a financial perspective, ARPA also put a new comprehensive financial policy in place to help provide the governance and oversight of financial planning and day-to-day operations.

Upcoming challenges will include recent inflationary pressures and cost uncertainty and how this will impact our ability to provide members with quality programs and services while the majority of our funding programs remain flat. We will also begin to look beyond our current financial certainty and provide some longer term financial planning for ARPA.

Graham Jones, ARPA Treasurer



SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

REVENUE	2023	2022
Grants & Contracts	1,583,800	2,204,313
Memberships	106,090	101,042
Educations Services	620,728	513,804
Projects	271,709	206,333
Casino	49,965	56,181
Administration	235,979	246,037
Donations	48	
Interest Income	1216	654
TOTAL REVENUES	2,869,535	3,328,364
EXPENSES		
Administration - General	68,926	50,892
GST Expenses	27,764	23,445
Salaries and Benefits	460,547	384,031
Board and Executive	28,699	21,713
Liaisons	1,932	3,378
CPRA/Memberships	31,125	26,483
Education Services	562,193	416,772
Casino	2,486	6,511
Committee and Network Activity	19,496	23,376
Projects	1,597,076	2,360,495
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,800,244	3,327,096

SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2023	2022
Current Assets		
Cash	444,119	286,711
Short Term Investments	775,000	1,130,233
Accounts Receivable	90,300	149,970
Prepaid Expenses	62,467	32,720
Advances Receivable	1,126	-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,374,012	1,599,635
Equipment		
Computer	63,140	63,140
Office	32,608	32,608
Subtotal	95,748	95,748
Less accumulated amortization	93,044	90,882
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	2,705	4,866
TOTAL ASSETS	1,508,191	1,604,501
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Bank Indebtedness	-	-
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	36,372	361,628
GST Payable	-	1,461
Long Term Debt	-	-
Deferred Contributions	912,796	751,680
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	949,168	1,114,769
NET ASSETS		
Internally Restricted Funds	186,324	185,108
Unrestricted Fund	369,994	299,758
Equipment Fund	2,705	4,866
TOTAL NET ASSETS	559,023	489,732
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	1,508,191	1,604,501