

AGM talk

**2024**

2024 was a year of both exciting progress and significant challenges, and I want to walk you through how we navigated it all.

First, let's talk about **fundraising**—Goal #1. Thanks to the **Government of Alberta**, we secured \$783,000 in multi-year funding for Project Elevation. This is an incredible investment in the future of our work, and we're deeply grateful for their support. Alongside this, we received over \$27,000 in additional funding, including contributions from the **David Elton Outdoor Fund**, **Eco-Canada**, and the **Calgary Foundation**. Their generosity has allowed us to continue vital programs and bring in summer staff. I also want to highlight the \$40,000 we received in 2023 from the McCaig Family Foundation, which directly addressed our CEBA loan. While technically a 2023 win, its impact was crucial for improving our financial position in 2024.

It's worth noting that fundraising is a journey. With an average success rate of just 30% in this field, we're still early in building strong relationships with funders. That said, we increased our grant applications from 2-4 annually to 18 this year—a significant leap forward.

**Project Elevation** has been transformative for our organization. Beyond promoting the professionalism of outdoor guides in Alberta, it's allowed us to connect with key tourism stakeholders provincially and nationally. Through this work, we've also made progress on **Fab 5**, our federal advocacy initiative, building relationships with key decision-makers at the national level.

For **Goal #2: The Field Leader Program**, we saw growth in course offerings early in the year. However, staffing challenges—including the sudden loss of our program coordinator mid-summer—delayed our ability to implement continuing professional development (CPD). Hiring a new program coordinator in November was a big step forward, but CPD has been postponed until next year.

On the **Fab 1, 2, 3 initiatives**—Goal #3—we strengthened collaboration with Alberta Parks, aligning guide certifications with park requirements. Project Elevation has amplified Fab 2's goal of showcasing the role of outdoor guides, and we've made significant strides internationally, committing to biannual meetings with the European Network of Outdoor Sports and the Outdoor Council of Australia.

Despite setbacks, 2024 was a year of progress, resilience, and growth. Thank you to our funders, partners, and team for making this possible.

## **2025**

Our systems for managing membership and certifications have struggled to meet our needs, especially since a platform migration in 2022 introduced significant glitches. While these issues created challenges, we're now in a strong position to address them. With a more capable team in place, we can focus on creating streamlined systems that enhance the experience for our members and instructors, improve communication, strengthen our certification processes, and lay the groundwork for future growth. This is about building the solid foundations OCC needs to thrive.

Solidifying the foundations of our membership and certificate program is a central goal for 2025 and will be an all staff effort.