



# Wood Buffalo Pride

2025 Annual Report



# NEW IDENTITY BIGGER IMPACT

We started 2025 by changing our name, updating our brand and committing to create more impact within the entire region for years to come.





## Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land we occupy is nistawâyâw (Cree), Eíldlј Kué (Dene), within Treaty 8, the traditional territory of the Cree, Dene and Métis people. In all the work we do, we challenge ongoing aspects of colonialism including homophobia, transphobia, heteronormativity, and cisnormativity.

We recognize and honour all the Indigenous people, especially Two Spirit people, who have stewarded this land for time immemorial prior to first contact, and who continue to resist oppressive colonial definitions of sexuality and gender to this day.



# CONTENTS



<b>About</b>	<b>3-5</b>
<b>Vision</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mission</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Values</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Team</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Letters</b>	<b>6-9</b>
<b>Mayor</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Board Chair</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>Programs</b>	<b>10-23</b>
<b>Rainbow Spaces</b>	<b>10-12</b>
<b>Qmmunity Connections</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>Indigenous Outreach</b>	<b>15-16</b>
<b>Pride Festival</b>	<b>17-20</b>
<b>Peer Support Groups</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Gender Affirming Gear</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Direct Services</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Our Funders</b>	<b>25</b>



## About Wood Buffalo Pride

As the only organization in our region dedicated to providing services for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, Wood Buffalo Pride works to provide support, connection, and resources to our community. Our work is built on finding common ground, advocacy through education, and reducing systemic barriers.

### Vision

An inclusive Wood Buffalo that is safe and free of discrimination for all 2SLGBTQIA+ people.



### Mission

We advocate for and empower 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and families in Wood Buffalo by fostering inclusion, providing education, and creating safe spaces that support equity, belonging, health, and well-being.

# Our Values

**Community Care** — We treat each other with kindness and compassion, support one another, and ask for help when needed. We prioritize creating joyful and connective spaces and programs that meet the needs of the community.



**Anti-Oppression** — We centre the voices of underrepresented community members, prioritize harm reduction, and actively resist upholding hierarchical and oppressive systems. We actively work to decolonize, by ensuring our work coincides with reconciliation and indigenization.

**Collaboration** — We know everyone has something to offer and we value each person's contribution and voice. We actively seek opportunities to collaborate with organizations that share our values and fulfil our collective visions.

**Accessibility** — We value diversity in all its forms and take care into ensuring that everyone can meaningfully engage and participate in our programs and events.

**Integrity** — We centre our values in our interactions and decision making. We ensure there are processes and systems in place to uphold our accountability to each other and to our community.

**Authenticity** — We commit to showing up as we are and encourage others to do the same. We strive to create safer and braver spaces and foster trust, openness, and connection within our community.

**Hope and Joy** — We are intentional about crafting a narrative of optimism for our community by sharing stories of hope and joy, fostering intergenerational connection, and curating uplifting and playful experiences for individuals of all ages.



**Education** — We meet people where they are at, connect people to the programs and resources they need, and create opportunities to learn about our collective history.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(As of December 31, 2025)

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Kathy Vladicka**

Co-Chair

**Cristina Rensmaag-Izaguirre**

Co-Chair

**Jon Davies**

Treasurer

**Rhonda Robinson**

Secretary

## DIRECTORS AT LARGE

**Kelli Stewart**

**Colleen Stewart**

**Jerry Nwigwe**

**Jennifer Stephenson**

**Prince Mapuranga**

# WB PRIDE STAFF

(As of December 31, 2025)

**Mitchel Bowers**

Executive Director

**Meto Nim**

Trans System Navigator

**Rowan Venedam**

Indigenous and Rural Outreach Coordinator

**Brooke McMillan**

Programs Coordinator

Wood Buffalo Pride would like to thank **Dawson White** for his support this year as our summer student!



# Letter from the Mayor



## Message from the Mayor

### Wood Buffalo Pride 2025 Annual Report

Please accept this message as our best wishes to the Wood Buffalo Pride Board of Directors, staff and all members as it shares its progress through this annual report.

While Pride has always aimed to serve the entire region, the recent re-naming of the organization to Wood Buffalo Pride further exemplifies the organization's goal of supporting all 2SLGBTQIA+ residents, regardless of where they call home. We commend them on this step and what it represents.

In my time as Mayor, one thing I can say is Pride Wood Buffalo continues to be a strong voice for its members and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, while aligning its efforts with other individuals, groups, and organizations that advocate for equity and inclusion. This can lead to a safer, more accessible and just region overall and we thank them for championing these values.

Pride Wood Buffalo continues to be an active participant on the Municipality's Regional Advisory Committee on Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, and the past year has demonstrated more good examples of continued collaboration. In particular, we would like to thank Wood Buffalo Pride Executive Director Mitchel Bowers, the team members, and the entire Board of Directors for its dedication.

Congratulations to Wood Buffalo Pride on its achievements over the last year, and for this update as it embarks on another year. We invite all community members to learn more about Wood Buffalo Pride and its goals, programs and initiatives as outlined in the annual report.

Sincerely,

Mayor Sandy Bowman  
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo



# Letter from the Executive Director



2025 was a year of growth and transformation. We started the year changing our name, rebranding, and I transitioned from my role as Board Chair to Executive Director. It brings me immense joy to see the organization flourishing and operating at its full capacity. Having the opportunity to move from a volunteer role to leading this organization is truly a privilege. Getting to dedicate myself fulltime to the work I'm most passionate about fills me with joy.

Speaking of joy, the theme of this year's Pride Festival was Queer Joy. We had more events, and partnerships than we have ever had before. All with the focus on creating spaces of authenticity and joy. In a political climate that can be scary and overwhelming, it was important for us to create these spaces of reprieve. This year we built an even stronger foundation so that in 2026 our 10th Annual Pride Festival can be the biggest and best ever!

This year saw the transformation of the staff team and that translated into a change in our programming. This year we greatly improved our service delivery and launched many new programs to meet more community needs. Though it wasn't always easy, with the support of our team and our partners we have not just persevered but have been extremely successful in our service delivery this year.

I look forward to another year of growth, and queer joy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mitchel Bowers".

**Mitchel Bowers**  
Executive Director

# Board Chair Report

As a Co-Chair of Wood Buffalo Pride, I am honoured to present this year's Chair's Report and to reflect on a year marked by significant challenge, growth, and transition. Guided by our mission to advocate for and empower 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and families through inclusion, education, and the creation of safe, affirming spaces — and by our vision of an inclusive Wood Buffalo free from discrimination — the organization responded to this year's challenges with intention, care, and resolve.



This year has been one of the most difficult in recent memory for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, particularly for trans and gender-diverse people. In Alberta, legislation was introduced that directly targets trans youth and restricts the rights, safety, and access to care for trans and gender-diverse individuals. The use of the notwithstanding clause to prevent court challenges to these laws further intensified fear and uncertainty within our community.

Within this context, Wood Buffalo Pride's work was both necessary and urgent. Advocacy, education, and community care remained central to our efforts. In response to increased need, the organization expanded its Trans Support Groups and introduced a trans-focused yoga program, providing additional spaces centred on affirmation, connection, and wellbeing. Wood Buffalo Pride also led public advocacy efforts in support of trans rights, including organizing community rallies, letter-writing campaigns, and petitions, as well as events recognizing Transgender Awareness Week, Trans Day of Remembrance, and International Transgender Day of Visibility.



This year's Pride Festival theme, Radical Joy, reflected a deliberate choice to centre resilience, celebration, and collective care in the face of adversity. Pride served not only as a celebration, but as an act of resistance and belonging.

Despite external pressures, Wood Buffalo Pride experienced significant growth in programming and community engagement. In addition to expanded trans and Two Spirit support groups, the organization continued to offer peer support spaces for adults, youth, caregivers, and Indigenous community members, as well as regular youth art and social programming. Staff supported community members through ID Clinics, gender-affirming care navigation, and employment support, and delivered inclusivity workshops for local organizations and businesses. Through initiatives such as Rainbow Spaces, Wood Buffalo Pride strengthened partnerships to create and recognize safer, more affirming environments across the region.

The organization also expanded programming into rural and Indigenous communities, including hosting Pride events in Fort Chipewyan, reflecting a commitment to ensuring Pride reaches people throughout the region.

This year also marked the rebranding from Pride YMM to Wood Buffalo Pride, alongside the launch of a new logo and visual identity that better reflects the region we serve and aligns our public identity with our mission and values.



The organization experienced leadership transitions this year, including a new Executive Director and a new board executive, as well as turnover among staff and board members. The board also continues to transition to a governance board. Navigating these changes required care, accountability, and sustained effort. These challenges will continue in the new year, with more new board members and a new executive for the Wood Buffalo Pride board.

Finally, I would like to thank our staff, volunteers, members, partners, and supporters. Your trust and engagement make this work possible. Together, we continue to build a community where 2SLGBTQIA+ people are supported, affirmed, and celebrated.

Kathy Vladicka (she/they)  
Co-Chair, Wood Buffalo Pride



# Rainbow Spaces

Rainbow Spaces is our flagship program, focused on creating safer and more inclusive spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in Wood Buffalo. We offer inclusivity workshops, public awareness and education campaigns, and our Rainbow Space certification program for organizations, businesses, and service providers. In October 2025 we launched our Rainbow Space Individual Certification program - a credential for any individual in the RMWB to highlight their intentional commitment to 2SLGBTQIA+-inclusivity and allyship.



- 29** Inclusivity Workshops Delivered in Fort McMurray
- 3** Inclusivity Workshops Delivered in Fort McKay
- 1** Inclusivity Workshop Delivered in Fort Chipewyan
- 217** Inclusivity Workshop Attendees
- 22** Certified Rainbow Space Organizations
- 10** Rainbow Space Certified Individuals



With Funding Support By:



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
OF WOOD BUFFALO

# Rainbow Spaces Directory

[wbpride.ca/rainbow-space-directory](http://wbpride.ca/rainbow-space-directory)

Arts Council Wood Buffalo

Athabasca Tribal Council

Autism Society of Wood Buffalo

Bailey's Pub

Boreal Therapy Collective

Canadian Mental Health Association Wood Buffalo Region

Echo Maker Inc.

Fort McKay Family Support

Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce

Fort McMurray International Airport

FuseSocial

Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta

Juniper Naturopathic Clinic

Justin Slade Youth Foundation

Salvation Army Fort McMurray

Some Other Solutions

St. Aidan's Society

Stonebridge Hotel

The Hub Family Resource Centre

United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo

Wood Buffalo Food Bank

YMM Collaborative Practice



## Rainbow Spaces Commitment

Staff Training

Inclusive Policies

Inclusive Documents

Accessible Facilities

Ongoing Allyship

## Rainbow Space Certified Individuals

Desirée Dakin

Rebecca Corcoran  
*Aisling Laser & Skin Care*

Rhonda Robinson

Tammy Lockyer, MSW, RSW, RPT, CPT  
*TLC Therapy*

Theresa Wells

Tyler Elcombe, CFP®  
Senior Financial Advisor at ATB Securities Inc.



+6 additional community members

With Funding Support By:



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# Community Impact

Some feedback from our Rainbow Space Inclusivity Workshop participants in 2025:

"The workshop helped to open my eyes to how many challenges there are out there for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community."

"Learning about changes in legislation really increased the feeling of urgency to host wellness + education days for youth."

"We can use the information provided to work with certain clients and hopefully make them feel more comfortable."

"Hearing why 2S is at the front of the acronym was a huge 'of course' moment."

"Very educational, great space to ask questions. Didn't feel like I was judged at all. So welcoming."

"Makes me feel more comfortable/encouraged to come to more Pride events."

"The data shocked me and made me realize that I have a responsibility to act!"

"I have a trans person in my life so its great to hear about supports."

"This workshop made me feel seen in experiences, and better equipped to handle uncomfortable situations."





# Qmmunity Connections

## Cabin Conversations - Speaker Series

Cabin Conversations was our free educational speaker series that ran monthly from June-December 2025. These community Conversations featured local and national speakers who are experts in their fields, presenting on a wide range of 2SLGBTQIA+ topics and issues.

**June 15th: History with a Drag Queen**  
with Karla Marx



**July 27th: Surviving HIV Since 1987**  
with Guy Choquet



**August 10th: The Wide Implications of Anti-Trans Legislation** with Rowan Venedam



**September 28th: Cultivating Kinship**  
with Cheyenne Mihko Kihêw



**October 26th: Communication with Comedy**  
with Toddy

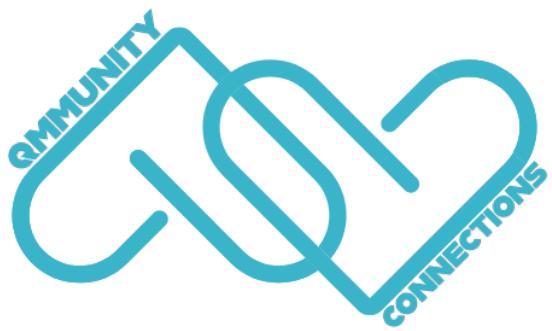


**November 9th: The Biology of Sex**  
with Kathy Vladicka



**December 7th: A Barrier to Belonging**  
with Imani Edwards

**7 Speakers & 84 Attendees**



# Qmunity Connections

Qmunity Connections is a program focused on bringing 2SLGBTQIA+ community members and allies together! We host inclusive, accessible events year round to create community, wellbeing, and a sense of belonging.

## **Fitness and Wellbeing** 7 programs 106 participants

## **Social Events** 14 events 151 participants

## **Creative Workshops** 23 events 141 participants

## **Education and Awareness** 6 events 76 participants

All Bodies Inclusive Swims at Mac Island

Pride Community Yoga and private Trans Yoga monthly classes at The District YMM

Pride Coffee Socials and BIPOC Coffee Socials

Pride Beach Day

Pride Family Tie Dye Party

Circle Time Cafe Family Program with The Hub

Storytime at the End of the Rainbow at the WBRL

True Colours Quilting Workshop with Bill Stearman

Creative Connections Youth Drop-in Arts Program with Justin Slade Youth Foundation

Wig Workshop at Keyano College

Identity Crafernoons with Arts Council Wood Buffalo

Queer Quiltivism Presentation with Bill Stearman

Art for Social Change Exhibit Tour for Pride members

Day of Pink ECHO Tour with Adrienne Rosen and Libby Davies

The Wild Wild West: Prairie Queerness Then and Now

The Wide Implications of Anti-Trans Legislation

Q&A with the Alberta Human Rights Commission

*Becoming Ruby* and *Pride vs. Prejudice* Documentary Screenings with Darrin Hagen



# Indigenous and Rural Outreach



*Alberta*  
Government



Women and Gender  
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité  
des genres Canada

Funded by the Government of Canada

Canada

Events in  
Janvier

# Highlights

## Fort Chipewyan Pride Day

This year we hosted the first ever Pride Day in Fort Chipewyan! It was a full day of events and involved so much community support! Other events in Fort Chipewyan included:

- Fort Chip Winter Carnival
- Inclusivity Training
- Dream Catcher Making
- Culture Camp



## ATC Cultural Festival

We were part of the Traditional Village at the ATC Cultural Festival. We were joined by Elder Richard Jenkins to teach about Two Spirit identity. Two Spirit artist Chantal Chagnon taught youth to drum and hosted a drum making workshop. At our tipi we taught participants how to make dream catchers.

## Ribbon Skirt & Shirt Making

Partnering with Nistawoyou Association Friendship Centre, we hosted workshops for Ribbon Shirt and Ribbon Skirt Making. We also hosted medicine walks and workshops to make:

- Beaded Wallets
- Beaded Lanyards
- Bath Blends



# Pride Festival: Radical Joy

The 2025 Pride Festival Theme chosen by our community was “Radical Joy.”

Radical Joy is defiant, powerful, and deeply political. Radical Joy is not a trend. It is not just rainbows, glitter, parades and parties. Radical Joy is what kept our queer and trans elders alive during the darkest days of the AIDS crisis. In choosing to centre Radical Joy as our theme, we remember that our joy is a force of resistance in the current movement to protect queer and trans rights in our province, and globally. Radical Joy is not an escape from the pain—it's the fuel that helps us survive it. Queer joy is medicine. Queer joy is protest. Queer joy is radical.



**36 Pride Festival Events  
862 Attendees**

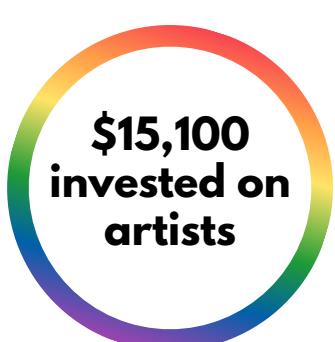


“Pride matters because it shows youth that they belong and that they are worth celebrating exactly as they are. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.”

“I feel so much joy, love, and acceptance at the Pride events. Everyone feels celebrated.”

# Pride Fair

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 we hosted our 9<sup>th</sup> annual Pride Fair! Thank you to all of the attendees, our volunteers, community partners, marketplace vendors, and performers for your support in making this event a huge success!



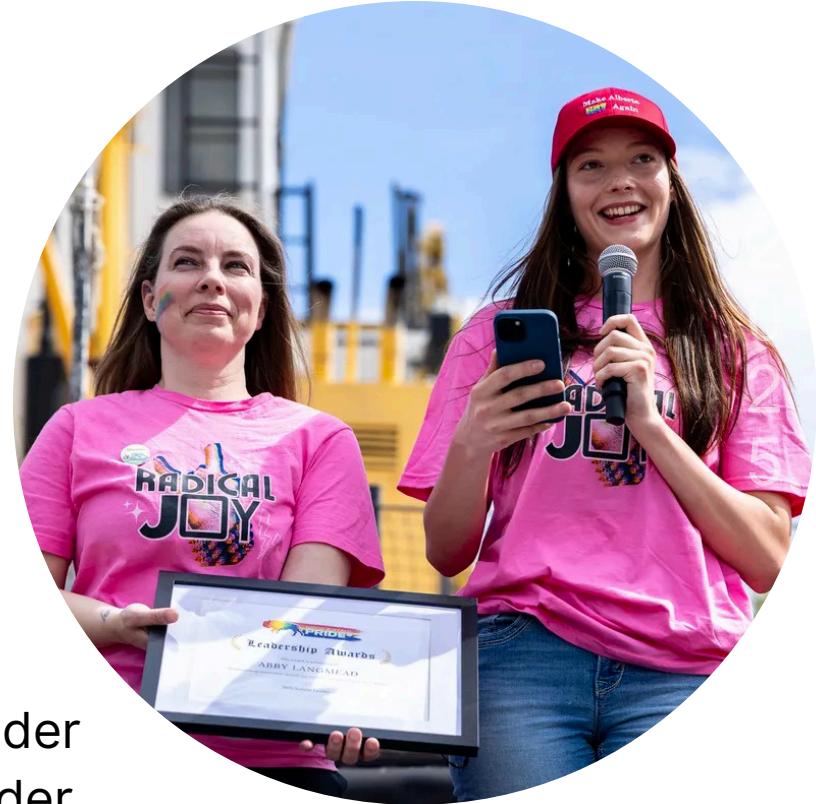
“ Everyone deserves a safe space to feel loved, to be heard and to be celebrated for who they are, and Wood Buffalo Pride has created exactly that space, not just during June, but every day.”



Live painting created by Danielle Fairweather at the 2025 Pride Fair

# Leadership Awards

We proudly recognized this year's Wood Buffalo Pride Leadership Award recipients at our Pride Fair.



## Recipients

<b>Gil Rogers</b>	Youth Leader
<b>JoJo Hill</b>	Artist Leader
<b>Punnya Selvaraj</b>	BPOC Leader
<b>Donna Aubichon</b>	Indigenous Leader
<b>Avenue Coffee</b>	Business Ally
<b>CMHA</b>	Non-Profit Ally
<b>Bryden Trapp</b>	Leader in Education
<b>Lisa Barter</b>	Professional Leader
<b>Abby Langmead</b>	Activist Leader
<b>Lizz Raiche</b>	Gender Diverse Leader



### Lizz Raiche Memorial Award

In 2024, our community lost a beautiful, kind, and creative young woman. To honour her memory and celebrate her life, Wood Buffalo Pride has hereafter renamed the Wood Buffalo Pride Leadership Award for Gender Diverse Leader the "Lizz Raiche Memorial Award."

# Thank you to our 2025 FESTIVAL SPONSORS

## PLATINUM



TD READY  
COMMITMENT



## GOLD



## SILVER



## BRONZE



## MEDIA



# TRANS PEER SUPPORT GROUP

**66 hours of Facilitated Peer Support**

48 groups, 18 Sessions

**41 people provided support**

28 Adults provided peer support

7 Youth provided peer support

6 Caregivers provided peer support



**“...I look forward to going every month.”**

**-Trans Support Group Participant**

## IMPACT

Based on surveys, to date:

**50% report an improvement in mental health**

**100% report finding connection and friends**

**100% report their access to resources and knowledge improved.**

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# GENDER AFFIRMING GEAR



**19 people provided Gender Affirming Gear**  
**38 information sessions with G.A.G. clients**

**28+ binders, 8+ trans tapes**  
**11 packing underwear**  
**1 tucking underwear**  
**3 packers**

## IMPACT

**Participant survey responses:**

**100% report a positive impact on mental health**  
**100% report an improvement in gender dysphoria**  
**100% foresee using the program again in 2026**



**“Being able to talk to someone and admit outloud how I truly felt about my gender, knowing the response would be supportive, encouraging and even excited, made me feel so comfortable and confident. It made me want to tell the world. It made me finally accept it myself...”**

**-G.A.G. Client**

# TRANS SYSTEM NAVIGATION DIRECT SERVICES

**126+ direct services** provided

**15+ Letters of Support**

**written for 2SLGBTQIA+ newcomers**



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Women and Gender  
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité  
des genres Canada

## 2SPIRIT SUPPORT GROUP

**In-Person**

**4 groups** offered since September

**Virtual**

**4 groups** offered since September

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Launched at the end of 2025

**2 people** provided direct employment support



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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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## Open House

In February we hosted an Open House where gathered community feedback to help shape our programs. The Open House will continue to be an annual opportunity for community engagement.

## Needs Assessment

This fall, with the support of the RMWB, we started the process of conducting a comprehensive Needs Assessment of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in our region. Results are expected mid-2026. To provide your feedback complete the **survey** or sign up for a **Focus Group**.

**Survey** - [bit.ly/wbpride](https://bit.ly/wbpride)

**Focus Groups** - [wbpride.ca/focus-groups](https://wbpride.ca/focus-groups)

## Advisory Groups

To ensure we are meeting the needs of marginalized voices in our community we are launching multiple Advisory Groups. Each group will be open to members of specific identities.

**Learn more & Sign Up** - [wbpride.ca/advisory-groups](https://wbpride.ca/advisory-groups)

# Our Funders



Women and Gender  
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité  
des genres Canada

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# Our Collaborators



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Wood Buffalo  
*Mental health for all*



ARTS COUNCIL  
WOOD BUFFALO



THE HUB  
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE



# Stay Connected



[info@wbpride.ca](mailto:info@wbpride.ca)



[www.wbpride.ca](http://www.wbpride.ca)



Wood Buffalo Pride



@woodbuffalopride

