

CALGARY RIVER USERS ALLIANCE

CRUA formed to improve recreational, non-motorized boating access to the Bow and Elbow rivers in Calgary

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The CURA consists of stakeholders from canoe, kayak, raft, fishing, conservation groups and businesses in the City of Calgary

FOUNDING MEMBERS OF CRUA

BOW RIVER CANOE CLUB

ALBERTA WHITE WATER ASSOCIATION

ROCKY MOUNTAIN PADDLING CENTRE

CALGARY KAYAK CLUB

ALBERTA SLALOM CANOE KAYAK

PADDLE ALBERTA

ALBERTA ANGLING OUTFITTERS ASSOC.

BOW RIVER FISHING INTERESTS

HARVIE PASSAGE ALLIANCE

CALGARY RIVER VALLEYS

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

UNDERCURRENTS

LAZY DAY RAFT RENTALS

RIVER WATCH

ISSUES:

CRUA

1. **The Bow & Elbow Rivers are not properly recognized by the general public as a tremendous recreational resource. River users lack up to date access points and boat access information.**
2. **The City of Calgary business community benefits from the recreational activities from locals and visitors. Aside from angling, there is little to no data available supporting the contribution recreational river users make to Calgary.**
3. **The “Parks & Pathways Bylaw” treats all public river banks in the City as parks. The bylaw prohibits wading or boat access from all river banks, except in designated Parks location. The bylaw needs clarification.**
4. **The Bow River is considered a “Blue River Trout Stream” and is recognized around the world as one of the best destinations for the opportunity to catch a “once in a lifetime” brown or rainbow trout.**
5. **Fishing boat owners and outfitters, rafting companies and staged events lack sufficient and adequate truck and trailer, boat ramp and parking facilities.**

ISSUES:

CRUA

6. The majority of river access points are poorly supported by facilities, few have parking lots and toilets close by creating a sanitation issue with many people relieving themselves “in the bushes” close to the rivers . In addition access trails are causing riverbank erosion due to unrestricted use.
7. The City of Calgary has been steadily closing access to designated boat ramps on the Bow River in recent years. **There are 8 formal boat ramps within the city, although only 2 are now open to the general public.** Canoes, kayaks, and small rafts only require access trails down riverbanks, but also benefit from boat ramps.
8. Harvie Passage needs to be seen by the City and the public as a safe recreational asset to Calgary.
9. There are opportunities being missed to incorporate recreational improvements into infrastructure projects of the Province and City.
10. The City of Calgary does not have a **Rivers Management Plan** which addresses recreation, education, conservation, and infrastructure issues.

GOALS

CRUA

1. **Represent interest of all boaters using Calgary rivers to improve non-motorized recreational boating access to the Bow and Elbow rivers**
2. **Improve working relations with the City of Calgary departments, specifically Fire, Police and Parks Departments**
3. **Clarify the intent of Calgary's "Parks & Pathways Bylaw" as it relates to river access**
4. **Educate City Councillors and City Departments of river recreation in Calgary and its importance to the local economy**
5. **Engage other interest groups, agencies and government bodies to enhance the usage and sustainability of Calgary's rivers**
6. **Encourage the inclusion of a recreational component to river infrastructure projects in Calgary**
7. **Work towards an overall River Management Plan**

OBJECTIVES

CRUA

1. **Establish short and long term action plans to meet CRUA objectives and goals.**
2. **Have a sustainable system of formal river access points.**
3. **Have seasonal toilets provided at river access points to improve sanitation.**
4. **Reduce riverbank erosion caused by unsupported and random river access activities, by formalizing access trails on riverbanks.**
5. **Have the existing informal boat access points upgraded in the short term by installing signs to publicize them, and in the longer term improve access trails to the river. Construct parking lots where necessary, and ensuring they are properly maintained.**
6. **Have all designated boat ramps re-opened to public and install signage with condition of use.**
7. **Ensure continued user input in the **Harvie Passage Redevelopment** process to assure boat ramp access, parking lots, signage, and nearby toilets.**

OBJECTIVES - CONTINUED

CRUA

8. **Have river access points and boat ramps formally designated for public use in the City's "Parks & Pathways Bylaw".**
9. **Develop a plan for recreational improvements along the Bow and Elbow rivers in Calgary.**
10. **Negotiate with the City and Province to include recreational components in selected river projects, For example, riverbank stabilization and bridge construction.**
11. **Have recreational river use and river access properly advertised by the City on their website and in their promotional and educational materials.**
12. **Support actions for the responsible recreational use of our rivers by respecting safety regulations and bylaws.**
13. **Assist in the development of plans to conserve, protect, and manage riparian areas and waterways.**
14. **Work with the City to develop a River Management Plan for Calgary's rivers, which would address issues including recreation, education, conservation, culture, flooding, and infrastructure**

2016 WORK PLAN

CRUA

PUBLIC INFORMATION

- Publicize the formation of the CRUA, its Goals and Objectives through social media, possibly a web site and direct contact with the City of Calgary.
- Promote river recreation and river access by the development of an interactive brochure and **River Access Map** which provides information on river access points, paddling routes, fishing locations, road access, support facilities, etc.

River Access Improvements

- Undertake an inventory of all river access points in Calgary, both designated and informal, their condition and potential upgrades.
- Respond to Calgary Park's offer to make basic improvements to boat launches in the current year.
- Engage in design of directional and educational signage for designated boat launch sites.
- Negotiate with Calgary Parks Dept. for the designation of the improved river access points and boat ramps for inclusion in the "**Parks & Pathways Bylaw**".

2016 WORK PLAN

CRUA

BOAT ACCESS

MEET WITH THE PARKS AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS. TO PRESS FOR THE RE-OPENING OF DESIGNATED BOAT RAMPS TO PUBLIC USE

Harvie Passage

- **Continue to actively participate in the [Harvie Passage Redevelopment Plan](#).**
- **Engage with the Parks Dept. "[Bend In The Bow Project](#)" to assure adequate river access and parking facilities for Harvie Passage.**

Research:

- **Collaborate with Paddle Alberta on funding for a river users survey in Calgary. ([STEP Program](#))**

2017 WORK PLAN

CRUA

- **Arrange with City Hall Management for a formal committee with representatives from [redacted] to work with, to ensure on-going river users' issues are addressed**
- **Undertake an organized, on-going education & lobbying effort of City Councilors in support of the value of river recreation and the need for funding for improved river access. A tour of the Bow River could be part of this action.**
- **Provide information to the media about the value of river recreation and the need for improved river access.**
- **Contact other existing organizations involved with local rivers to get their advice and support. For example, Alberta Conservation Association and Bow River Basin Council .**
- **Identify desirable recreational river improvements and negotiate with the Province and City for their inclusion in public infrastructure projects.**

2018 WORK PLAN

- **Select lower-priority informal boat access points and submit to Parks for substantial shoreline improvements within 5 years.**
- **Negotiate with the City to widen Emergency Services Boat Ramps to provide guaranteed public access.**
- **Work with the City to expand the “Bend In The Bow Project” to an overall River Management Plan, that could incorporate “River Trails” parallel to the river pathway system that would address river recreation, cultural history, ecology, community, and flooding.**

SUMMARY

- **CRUA believes that improving non-motorized recreational boat access within the City of Calgary will contribute greatly to the recreational paddling and angling experience of both local citizens and visitors.**
- **This will lead to an increase in the demand for equipment and services, which will benefit local equipment businesses, restaurants and hotels.**
- **Properly managed river access locations will improve safety, reduce conflicts with other river users and landowners, and minimize damage to vegetation and other shoreline natural resources.**
- **Furthermore, the importance to the City of Calgary of good-quality boat access cannot be overstated. Well-designed boat access and parking is critical to a safe, enjoyable trip on the river, reducing risk, time, and expense to the City of Calgary's Emergency Services.**