



## Calgary River Users' Alliance Position Statement

### Background:

The Calgary River Users' Alliance (CRUA) was formed in January 2016 with the objective of improving recreational boating access to the Bow and Elbow Rivers in Calgary. The CRUA will also address other needs and concerns that are common to recreational river users. The CRUA consists of representatives of recreation and conservation groups and businesses in the city, including canoeing, kayaking, rafting, paddle-boarding, river surfing, and fishing.

In June 2016, Calgary City Council asked Administration to create a strategy that will allow for better access to the river while respecting the needs of all park users and the environment. The goal of this strategy was to ensure easier, safer, legal and environmentally friendly river access to the Bow and Elbow Rivers within City limits.

The participation rate of Calgarians in paddling sports, canoeing, kayaking, paddle boards and river rafting now outranks most other organized sport activity including soccer, hockey, baseball/softball, basketball and many other sports that receive substantial capital and operational financial support from the City of Calgary each year. (Alberta Recreation Survey, 2017). When combined with a vibrant local business and fishing community, recreational river use contributes in excess of \$50 million annually to local economy.

CRUA was instrumental as a principal river user stakeholder and active participant in the development of the Calgary River Access Strategy (RAS), a \$7.6 million commitment to improve river access within Calgary. Since that time CRUA's role has expanded through our member organizations to include the rollout of improvements to Harvie Passage, upgrades to river access at Policeman's Flats River Access on the southern perimeter of the city and at Calgary Municipal Land Corporation – St. Patrick's Island. Our members have also engaged in the consultation process for the Government of Alberta - Bow River Access Plan (BRAP) and Bow Basin Water Management Options (BBWMO). Our alliance organizations have financially secured in excess of \$400,000 in funding for these projects.

### Key Messages:

As a guiding principle the CRUA supports the need for safe and informed practices on and near the Bow and Elbow Rivers, including compliance with applicable regulations, respect for others and for the environment. The CRUA understands, and wishes to protect and promote, the value of Calgary's two main rivers and their adjacent lands for their natural ecological functions and as aesthetic and recreational amenities for all Calgarians.

### Our Vision:

- There should be strategically located river access facilities for all types of river users that provide good access to each of the river reaches within the City of Calgary.
- River access locations are fully supported with the necessary ancillary features for recreation users such as parking lots, toilets, changing rooms, boat ramps/ hardened pathways to the river, equipment storage, and boating safety and trip information through signage, websites, and brochures/maps.
- Each quadrant of the City has access to a river recreation facility that enables local citizens to enjoy the river, learn about river safety, and develop requisite skills.
- A full range of strategies be developed to offer safe and enjoyable river float trips from one end of the City to the other, which may take from one hour to a full day in duration.
- To support Bow River Basin recreation and water management initiatives of importance to the river user community.



**Membership:**

CRUA membership consists of the following stakeholders' organizations:

Bow Waters Canoe Club	Alberta White Water Association	Calgary Kayak Club
Rocky Mountain Paddling Centre	Alberta Slalom Canoe Kayak	Paddle Alberta
Calgary River Valleys	Paddle Junkies	Angling Outfitter & Guide Association of Alberta
Bow River Trout Foundation	Alberta Slalom Canoe Kayak	Lazy Day Raft Rental
RiverWatch Institute of Alberta	AQ Outdoors	University of Calgary Outdoor Program
Alberta River Surfing Association	Waterwerks Kayak Club	Harvie Passage Alliance

**Note:** The Harvie Passage Alliance stakeholders are all members of CRUA

**Communications:**

The CRUA objective is to communicate all pertinent river use information to the membership and community at large through our website, <https://www.calgaryriverusers.org/> and social media sites. All recreational and commercial interests from the river user community will be encouraged to join CRUA. An expanded mailing list of all interested parties is being compiled through our current membership organizations.

**Future Plans:**

The following chart illustrates how CRUA functions as a representative of the river user community, and how it is a key link between users, businesses, government, and regulatory agencies.

Our Alliance continues to grow with an expanded outreach into the business and government community. Our vision is to see CRUA increasingly acting as a focal point for stakeholder engagement, collection & dissemination of information within the river user community. An enhanced role for CRUA is being considered in meeting the challenge of the development of river recreational infrastructure.

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