



Calgary River Users' Alliance Position Statement Updates March 2022

Background:

The Calgary River Users' Alliance (CRUA) was formed in January 2016 to improve 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, paddleboards, 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 more than \$50 million annually to the 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), the Bow Basin Water Management Options (BBWMO), and various provincial water and fishery management and advisory groups. Our alliance organizations have financially secured more than \$400,000 in funding to support these projects.

In 2022 we embarked on a wider scope of engagement and a mandate to expand recreational river use throughout the Bow River Basin. The Bow Basin River Recreational Management Plan will guide this directive into the future with a revision to our vision for the organization that better fits our objectives.

Key Messages:

As a guiding principle, the CRUA supports the need for safe and informed practices on and near the Bow River and its tributaries, including compliance with applicable regulations, respect for others and the environment. The CRUA understands, and wishes to protect and promote, the value of rivers and their adjacent lands for their natural ecological functions and as aesthetic and recreational amenities for all to use.

Our Vision:

- Strategically located river access sites for all types of recreational river use are needed within Calgary, and across the entire Bow River Basin.
- River access infrastructure sites to be fully supported with ancillary features to optimize recreational river use. They would include parking lots, boat ramps, toilets, and possibly changing rooms and equipment storage for water recreation parks.



- Each quadrant of the City of Calgary, and other urban centers, have access to river recreation facilities that enable its citizens to enjoy and protect the river, learn the requisite skills for safety on and around rivers.
- The importance of the Bow River's ecology, the water, riparian habitat, and the world-class sport fishery is recognized.
- With the cooperation of our member organizations, develop a full range of strategies to offer safe and enjoyable river recreational use.
- CRUA will work closely with Provincial and municipal government agencies to advance the interests of the Bow River Basin recreational users.

Membership:

The 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	Lazy Day Raft Rental	RiverWatch Institute of Alberta
Paddle Station	Waterwerks Kayak Club	University of Calgary Outdoor Program
Alberta River Surfing Association	Harvie Passage Alliance	Calgary Fish and Game Association

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 member 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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