



A Howlin' Good Time

River Park Off-leash News

October



2010

UPCOMING STUFF

RIVER PARK CLEAN-UP

Saturday, November 6
10:30 - noon



Join us for another clean-up and maintenance effort in River Park. We'll focus on garbage,

cigarette butts and feces.

As well, can some of you volunteer to help rake gravel back onto the trail?



The area of concern is located from the bulletin board up to the large garbage bin at the north end.

Earlier this year, some of us raked the south end of the park. It only put a dent in the mess caused by the City truck that graded the trail during last year's snow storm.

Depending on the activity you prefer, please bring gloves, bags and a shovel or a rake. Thanks for your consideration. Hope to see you there.

Please feel free to share this newsletter with friends. If at any time you no longer wish to receive communication, just let me know.

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River Park, Sandy Beach, Britannia Slope Update

Just a few short updates on some new and old park matters.



Candice, Ald. Pincott and Kate on Scoopy Doo Day

Volunteer Programs

The City of Calgary Dog Ambassador and Park Ranger programs will be decommissioned this year. As some

of you know, three of us from the Friends of River Park leadership team have volunteered in River Park for a few years. Linda is a Park Ranger and Kate and I have acted as Dog Ambassadors.

My City of Calgary contact said Parks will undergo a bit of a shift. Apparently new volunteer opportunities will be created. Once the dust settles, we'll decide whether or not to get involved.

The changes with Parks will not affect the Friends of River Park leadership team's volunteer work. We'll continue to hold clean-up efforts every two months, even during winter. We'll also continue to stock dog waste bags, manage the bulletin board and monitor the park for maintenance needs and vandalism.

Water by the Parking Lot

Are you still concerned about pooling of water near the River Park parking lot? Whenever it floods, please call 3-1-1 and ensure you get a service request number. Response time is 14 days.

Here's some history about the issue. For many years it has flooded. Two years ago a French drain was installed and twice The City tried to fix it.

This year on August 13, The City tried pumping and redirecting the water. I called 3-1-1 and spoke with Diane on October 1. Shortly afterward, it either drained on its own or maybe Parks responded.

Gravel Alongside River Park's Trail

When I followed up on my 3-1-1 service request to address the gravel mess made by City staff last November, I was told staff

were sent to evaluate the problem, but they couldn't locate the area of concern. I asked 3-1-1 staff to create another service request. I also spoke with Alderman Brian Pincott about it and he offered to help follow up on the matter.

Parks did not respond to my 3-1-1 request by the due date so I called again and spoke with Diane on October 1. The report on file stated the gravel was collected and placed back onto the trail. Not true. The gravel is untouched on either side of the trail from the bulletin board to the large bin at the north end of the park. The gravel is killing the grass and it's unsightly.

Alderman Pincott has been updated.

I feel our biggest concern is once the management and development plan for the River Park proceeds, dogs will also be blamed for this wear and tear on the park.

Dog-made Holes

Last year, Colleen from the Friends of River Park leadership team stepped into a hole and badly hurt her knee. Her accident prompted us to fill a few holes with gravel.



Raise your dog's right paw if it's guilty of digging holes in the park. Please stop them from creating these safety hazards and unsightly messes. Regardless of size, the holes are extremely hard to see now that darkness falls earlier.



River Park Fountain

In September, irrigation crews started to shut down water systems in community parks. The countdown is on. Don't be surprised if there's no water the next time

your dog visits the River Park fountain. Each year the fountain is operational approximately from the May long weekend until the Thanksgiving holiday.

TIME TO LIGHTEN UP! Night lights for pooches



Darkness falls earlier these days so it's time to start carrying a small flashlight and dress our dogs in their illuminated collars. These measures will help us to know where our dogs are at all times and enable us to locate their droppings.

Don't want to spend a fortune on light sources? You don't have to. There are many good quality flashlights that are affordable and small enough to fit in

your pocket. Or better yet, choose a small flashlight that fits on your keys.

Online providers and pet stores carry a good assortment of lighting solutions for dog collars. The quality and pricing varies greatly. Inexpensive alternatives such as a bike light or head lamp also work like a charm.

So dress up your dog in a night light and carry a flashlight to increase visibility this fall and winter. All measures help to keep our dogs safe and ensure the park is clean for everyone's enjoyment.

A Fond Farewell

In July, one of Neil's Siberian Huskies was involved in a mysterious incident and died one week later.

Portia was a gentle soul with a beautiful white coat and black saddle. She enjoyed several years of walks in River Park and down at Sandy Beach with her sister, Kiva. Portia also spent many weekends on hiking adventures in the mountains.

Some of you may remember a lost dog notice about a 10-month-old Siberian Husky named **Thor**. His owners reported him missing from their yard one day in August. Unfortunately Thor was hit by a car and did not survive.

Living with Coyotes in the City



Whether you like it or not, coyotes are just a natural occurrence in the city. Attempts to rid these smart and territorial animals are futile because they're extremely adaptable. They

are able to multiply quickly to preserve their existence. Coyotes typically eat rabbits, mice and squirrels, but when food sources are low, they will also eat garbage, compost, bird feed, pet food and even dog feces.

Sightings at River Park are typically infrequent, but don't let your guard down. They regard small animals as prey and large animals as predators. If you encounter one, they may consider your dog a threat. To eliminate the threat, they may try to entice your dog away and / or attack it.

Although difficult, try to remain calm and know what to do. Here are some points to keep in mind.

Be the aggressor

- Maintain eye contact at all times
- Make yourself appear larger (open your coat and hold your arms out to the side and wave them)
- Throw sticks, rocks or another object at them
- Shout using a deep voice
- Stamp your foot at them

Remove yourself from danger

- Leash your dog and leave the area
- Back away slowly while maintaining eye contact
- Move toward buildings or human activity
- Never run – they consider this submissive behaviour and will likely chase you

Reduce encounters

- They appear more frequently in residential areas during in winter when their food supplies are lower. Help reduce encounters and keep them out of your neighborhood by eliminating improperly stored garbage and any food sources from your yard.
- Help keep them away from the off-leash park and your yard by picking up your dog's droppings – this eliminates feces as coyotes' potential food source.

Awareness and assertiveness is your best defense. As coyotes are here to stay, we have to learn to live with them.

For more info contact:

Sustainable Resource Development
www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/fw

The Urban Coyote
www.city.mississauga.on.ca/animal_control/html/wlpro/wlprocoyote.htm

Wildlife in the City
www.city.toronto.on.ca/animal_services/wild.htm
Calgary Fish and Wildlife Coyote Hotline
297-7789

River Park Calendars

Several of you know that I have created River Park calendars for the past few years and sold them at cost.

The 2011 edition is in the final stages before going to print. As with previous years, I will send a list of everyone featured and ask for permission to use their picture.

If you're interested in getting a copy, please let me know. Once numbers are finalized, I'll get quotes from a printer. Costs have varied over the years, since the price per unit decreases when larger orders are placed. In the past, the range has been \$9 to \$16.

Please don't be offended if I took your picture but it was not used. Some photos simply didn't turn out well for various reasons (eyes closed, furry subjects not cooperating, etc).

I still managed to get lots of great photos of dogs and their people having a howling good time in River Park.

Stay tuned for more calendar news.

