



A Howlin' Good Time OFF-LEASH NEWS

JULY 2015



Pet-A-Palooza
Saturday, July 25
10am - 4pm
Eau Claire Market
200 Barclay Parade SW
A free event featuring up to 85 of the leading pet-related exhibitors. More info on [their website](#) or [this link](#).



SAVE THE DATE

Next River Park Clean-up
Sunday, September 13
11am - 2pm
We're partnering with The City of Calgary for another clean-up event. Details TBA.

UNSUBSCRIBE OPTION

If for some reason you no longer wish to receive communication, just let me know.

Candice

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River Park Clean-Up Results

We, The Friends of River Park Off-leash Advocates, were asked to partner with The City of Calgary for its annual clean-up effort (P.U.P.P.Y. a.k.a. "Pick Up Puppy's Poo Yourself" at River Park on Saturday, June 7.

Yay us! Just over 60 people came out to support the official clean-up at River Park on June 7. Many thanks to everyone for pitching in to help!



Park Users Take Note

Let's consider how high summer use at River Park and Sandy Beach affects the people in the neighbourhood, specifically residents who live along 14A Street and 50 Avenue.

A fair amount of people drive to River Park to walk dogs and many people from all over the city come to launch rafts at Sandy Beach. That means parking lot spots will be in high demand, and more cars will be parked along 14A Street and 50 Avenue.

Over the years, I have attended meetings with various groups about River Park use. Here are some of the concerns residents expressed about people and cars:

- Speeding
- Parking in front of their houses/blocking driveways
- People using their driveways to turn around
- Headlights shining in their windows
- Garbage left in their yards (full poop bags, beverage containers, food wrappers, broken and / or discarded rafts)

We feel much of the bad behaviour is not from dog owners, but it's good to keep in mind how everyone can be respectful when using the area.



Non-Emergency Incidents

Occasionally unfortunate incidents such as break-ins, vandalism or dog bites happen at River Park. If you ever have to report a non-emergency incident, this is done through 3-1-1.

At some point, one of the details the operator requests is the park's address, something few park users know.

As well as the address, here is some general info about River Park:

Location: 4500 14A St SW (stretches from 38 Ave to 50 Ave)

Area: 21 hectares

Park hours: 5 am - 11 pm

[See more](#) on The City of Calgary website.



My Opinion About Cycling and Off-leash Dogs in a Multi-Use Park

Although I've previously written about cycling and dogs in River Park, I've observed a few incidents and felt a bit frustrated lately.

Before I get started please note three things:

1. Initially when we adopted our current dog two and a half years ago, she chased runners, cyclists and cars. She can be a challenging dog. We have worked tirelessly to break her of these habits with much success, but once in a while she'll still chase an intense cyclist.
2. Although I'm no expert, I have cycled and walked or run with my dogs at River Park for almost 30 years, so I can empathize with various users.
3. I have attended countless meetings about the park with aldermen, residents, competing interest groups and Animal & Bylaw Services; represented dog people at City Hall and tried to educate fellow dog owners about responsible dog and people behaviour in River Park. As a result, I believe I may observe/advocate for/use the park somewhat differently than the average park user.

So here's what I've noticed since early Spring:

- At times people aren't getting along nicely.
- Many cyclists ride fast through River Park without regard to dogs, children or pedestrians.
- Sometimes the cyclist slows down, but often this isn't the case.
- Not once have I observed a cyclist using their bell and in many cases, the cyclist doesn't even have a bell.
- Once in a while, a cyclist will yell and kick at the offending dog and berate the owner.
- Most dog owners can NOT get their dog under control quickly enough.
- Most dog owners are not close enough to stop their dog from chasing or prevent a bite incident.
- Dog owners retaliate and tell cyclists that they're riding inappropriately in an off-leash park.
- Periodically someone appears to be leading a course in the park for non-dog people to learn how to deal with poorly behaved dogs.

To clarify: **River Park is a multi-use area with off-leash access.** Off-leash access in the park is a privilege not a right. Although cyclists can go anywhere, they have the right to use the park despite 14A Street being the signed and official designated bikeway. Please note: The gravel route through the middle of the park is a TRAIL — it's not a pathway so there are different rules).

Let's take all emotions out of the equation and look at the basics:

- Some dogs chase. Cycling and dogs don't mix well.
- Dogs chasing a cyclist is inappropriate behaviour.
- Dogs MUST be in control at all times, regardless of where they are... period, no excuses.
- Dog bites are completely unacceptable.
- Dogs don't know rules unless we teach them.
- Many cyclists are going too fast.
- Many cyclists don't follow rules and regulations (bell use, speed limits etc.).
- Many cyclists don't understand dog behaviour.
- People have the ability to evaluate, reason, respond, trouble-shoot and communicate.

Can we co-exist in River Park? Of course we can. Much of this is simple to remember and easy employ. All it takes is some education, respect, a bit of understanding, consideration and willingness to get along.



River Park Update from Ward 11 Councillor Brian Pincott

In his recent newsletter, Ward 11 Councillor **Brian Pincott** featured an article that will be of interest to River Park users:

River Park, Sandy Beach & Britannia Slopes Phase II Update Construction of Phase II is anticipated to begin in September/October 2015. Currently, the Parks team is working on the information signage to outline expected Phase II work. The public signs describing the work should be installed in the parks about a month prior to construction.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



Paws for Thought

This month, some interesting articles to share. Enjoy!

[An opinion](#) about pet adoption parameters from [The Dodo](#)



Read about [10 famous dogs](#) from [CBC's Doc Zone](#)



[Vets to Go](#) sniffed out the [best pet-friendly places](#) in Calgary



Caring for Your Pet In Sickness and Health

This section features some great online info to help keep all of our furry family members healthy and happy.

[Eco-friendly pet care tips](#) from the [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association](#)



Learn about a [calm walking technique](#) from [Dr Sophia Yin](#)



[Human foods](#) that are great for dogs from [Modern Dog Magazine](#)

