



A Howlin' Good Time OFF-LEASH NEWS

NOVEMBER 2015

River Park Clean-up Saturday, Nov 14 10:30am - noon

Join our last official group effort for 2015!



River Park Tree Decorating Sunday, Nov 22 11 - noon

Everyone and their dog welcome.



17th Annual River Park Canine Christmas Gathering Saturday, Dec 5 6:30-8:30pm







Mark your calendars and don't miss out! Watch for more details in December's newsletter and on Twitter and Facebook.

UNSUBSCRIBE OPTION

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

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River Park Clean-up

Join us on November 14 from 10:30am to noon to give the park a once-over before the snow cover stays! The west side of the park looks in pretty good shape but it's likely more dirty on the east side where the grass is longer. We'll concentrate our efforts on the east side from the parking lot to the fence at toboggan hill.



Please bring gloves/bags or a pail/shovel. We may or may not set up the sign-in table near the parking lot. In any case, watch for Candice in a blue vest as she'll have sign-up sheets. She forwards our results to The City of Calgary. In the event of snow, we'll postpone the clean-up so watch for updates by email, Twitter and Facebook.

November Fundraisers

Here are a couple of events supporting local charities.

COCKTAILS FOR CRITTERS

(Calgary Humane Society fundraiser)

Nov 6 | 7pm | Hotel Arts (119 12 Ave SW)

Mingle with local celebrities and professional athletes plus enjoy a unique fashion show, silent auction, cocktails and guest appearances from some four-legged furiends! More details and ticket info [here](#).

HEALING PAWS PALA

(PALS fundraiser)

Nov 14 | 6:30pm | Heritage Park

Celebrate PALS 30th anniversary with cocktails, hor d'oeuvres, raffels and a silent auction. Buy tickets in advance through the [PALS website](#).

'Tis the Season for Tree Decorating in River Park

Join the Friends of River Park leadership team on **Sunday, Nov 22** starting at 11:00am to decorate trees for the Christmas season for everyone to enjoy. We will transform four trees near the River Park fountain — the area also known as Cat's Park.

Keep in mind we always follow simple rules to ensure the safety of dogs, children, trees and the park:

1. Decorations must be non-breakable
2. No tinsel or bits that can end up spread throughout the park or inside dog's tummies
3. Items must be hung out of dogs' reach

Over time, we have collected a fair amount of decorations for River Park. By the way, donated decorations are always welcome and all of them are saved for future years. Please note we can't guarantee security of donated items.

Although we ensure there are no glass ornaments, breakage occasionally occurs. If you see something broken in the weeks to come, please pick it up. The area will remain decorated until one or two months after Christmas, then we'll do a group take-down effort. Enjoy the festive season at River Park!

Check out the fun we had last year!



Did You Vote... for Bruce?

No we're not talking about the federal election.

A while back, some of you may remember one of our very own River Park pack members was vying for a spot in the 2016 SPCA fundraising calendar. Well thanks in part to your efforts, Bruce made it! His studliness is proudly featured as Mr June.

Calendars are available for sale on the SPCA website as well as at various businesses throughout Calgary. Gezelle (Bruce's mom) extends her appreciation to everyone who voted for him!



Dog Waste Bags at River Park



Use in excess of 9000 dog waste bags per month at River Park during the better portion of this year is alarming to say the least. It prompted us to review our education strategy with dog people. We launched a campaign to educate park people

about responsibility, the supply source, high bag use, fundraising and stewardship efforts. We put up posters and didn't supply any bags for one month.

People who use the bags as their personal supply would have noticed no bags available and we hope they also learned about the responsible culture at River Park. And perhaps some of us had an opportunity to educate fellow park users.

Throughout our educational campaign we noticed people contributed bags for the IKEA bag holders and the green metal dispensers. Many thanks to these people for helping out in their own special way.

In November, we will resume bag supplies in the park.

Paws for Thought

This month, here are some interesting and helpful finds to share with everyone.

[Dogster Magazine](#) shared an article that concludes [having a dog boosts human health](#)



How pets help build communities from [Pacific Standard Magazine](#)



Introducing a new dog into the pack from [Dr Sophia Yin](#)



Reader's Comments Regarding Bad Off-leash Experiences

For the most part, we typically hear River Park is one of the best off-leash areas for people and dogs. Unfortunately not everyone has had a great experience. Dana recently wrote to express some concerns and ask for support, acknowledgment and understanding from fellow park users.

"I miss the culture in River Park that I first encountered 15 years ago. I am writing to you out of frustration and a need to vent after witnessing a big dog attack a little dog at River Park.

A Husky ran up and grabbed a little dog by the neck and shook it. The Husky and it's owner were hanging out like nothing was wrong. The woman with the Husky said it wasn't her dog; she said she was just walking it and couldn't really control it. The little dog, a chihuahua, was not bleeding and walking okay but it screamed when its owner tried to pick it up. I sure hope it's ok.

This behavior infuriates me!

I have 2 small dogs that I have stopped bringing to the park because of numerous attempted attacks on them. This saddens me because they do love the park as much as big dogs.

I did not retreat when the attacks happened. I confronted the owners. Some were genuinely upset at their dog's behavior, others just ignored the incident and my comments. I've actually had a few tell me that I shouldn't bring my little dogs to a "BIG DOG" park.

When people say, "It's not my dog, I'm just walking it." THIS IS NO EXCUSE! It's not responsible.

Pouncing and shaking are a dog's hunting tactics. Many people think it's cute and they're just playing. Yes, it's cute sometimes. But it's not ok for dogs to practice their hunting skills on other dogs at the park.

I've struggled with a dog's training too. There are good days and bad days. I see many people going through the same thing. I've also encountered many people who are failing at being responsible, considerate dog owners. I want to set an example by calling out the irresponsible dog owners and making it an uncomfortable place for them to be and they won't attend anymore. The park will be a better place."

Thanks to Dana for her comments. The bottom line is:

- Everyone and every dog is welcome at the park.
- Dogs need to be in control at all times.
- Respect and responsibility ensures a great experience for all.



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.

5 signs your dog is stressed from [PetMD](#)



A physical exam checklist from [Veterinarypartner.com](#)



Dog breath tips from the [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association](#)

