



## Recommendations

Preserve public access to the river in ways that minimize environmental impacts and user conflicts

- > Provide designated public access points in areas that have already been disturbed,
- > Discourage the use of undesignated river access points with temporary trail closure, restoration barriers and signage
- > Use ramps to provide safe access at designated access points where banks are steep or eroded
- > Create separate river access for people and dogs for health and safety concerns, and to reduce user conflicts
- > Create a separate river access point for rafts, kayaks and canoes to reduce user conflicts

## Protect fish habitat

- > Close some public access points during fish spawning and incubation periods. Periods of closure will vary each year depending on weather conditions, but river access in the summer will not be affected.

## Improve the water quality of the Elbow River

- > Explore the potential for a volunteer water monitoring program with Adopt-a-Park volunteers
- > Use low impact development techniques and best management practices to reduce runoff from parking lots
- > Use water sensitive landscape designs to capture and filter stormwater runoff from parklands

## Key Features

- > Preservation Zones – areas where sensitive natural areas are intact, but require ongoing protection
  - > Restoration Zones – areas where active restoration (planting, seeding, etc.) is recommended
  - ① Beach Area + River Access at Sandy Beach – restored beach area for people, no dogs allowed in water
  - ② Dog Access to River at Britannia Slopes and Lower Reservoir – two points of access on existing gravel bars
  - ③ Raft and Kayak River Access – a gravel ramp at south end of Sandy Beach
  - ④ Restoration Barriers – restricts access to streambanks under restoration
  - ⑤ Ecological Park with Feature Pond - an attractive ecological park including a feature pond with enhanced stormwater function.
  - ⑥ Daylight Skinny Creek – explore the feasibility of daylighting (redirect surface flow from a pipe to a natural channel) Skinny Creek to better manage stormwater
- See other display boards for additional recommendations related to Water Use.

## Rationale

There was general agreement that current patterns of use were detrimental to the streambanks, riparian areas, fish habitat and water quality. Limiting access to designated points and having separate access points was suggested, but public reaction was mixed. Some suggested more bylaw enforcement and signage could be used to change behaviors, or more access points would be less damaging than concentrating access. Spreading use over a large number of access points has resulted in the current situation-extensive areas of damage. Therefore, the Draft Plan proposes a limited number of designated access points for different user groups to reduce the area of environmental impact and user conflicts. While the recommendation to allow off-leash dogs access to the river through a sensitive riparian area carries some environmental risk, there was very strong support to maintain a convenient river access point for dogs.

The Draft Plan proposes a balanced strategy to maintain river access for dogs, but reduce risk of environmental damage. An on-leash trail leading to this river access point will help protect the adjacent Restoration Zones. The use of restoration barriers at the top of banks will protect streambanks from off-leash dogs exiting the river. The Draft Plan also recommends seasonal closure to reduce impacts on brown trout, rainbow trout and whitefish spawning and incubation periods. These river access strategies will improve the water quality by reducing erosion and sedimentation. The Draft Plan proposes additional measures to improve water quality through better stormwater management. By restoring and enhancing the natural flows through vegetated swales, creeks and ponds, less pollution will runoff into the Elbow River. Low impact development techniques such as vegetated buffers around parking lots will also filter pollutants and sediment from stormwater before it reaches the river.

