

Clean Rivers, Cool Communities

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Many cities around the world are located on or near rivers, and as a result garbage always tends to end up in the rivers and deposited on the river beds. What happens to the garbage that ends up in the river? This post looks at the case of Calgary (Canada), which has an annual river cleanup day.

When walking along the Bow River in Calgary (Canada), it is easy to notice the picturesque scenery, and the numerous people along the river pathways taking in the diverse activities that are offered- including biking, rafting, rollerblading, jogging and walking by the river. Calgary has an organized river clean-up day where communities get involved and help pick out the garbage from the river and river banks. This event started in 1967 when Sandra Crawford, a 12 year old Calgarian, spotted an entire mattress floating in the Elbow River and wrote a letter to the local newspaper (City of Calgary 2012). This letter gained the attention of many Calgarians, which led to a community led initiative to clean up the city's rivers. Since 1967, Calgarians have organized each year one day dedicated to cleaning up the city's rivers, reservoirs and river pathways. Last May marked the 45th annual river and pathway cleanup in Calgary, and this event saw almost 2000 volunteers picking up garbage from the different rivers and reservoirs in Calgary. In total they covered nearly 200km of pathways and collected over 5700 kg of garbage (City of Calgary 2012). This event brings out different groups of people including corporate groups, school groups, families and individuals. It is a great initiative which brings together people living in Calgary to take care of their rivers, and to work to maintain its cultural and ecological values!

Would a similar initiative work in your community?

* This type of event is not unique to Calgary. By typing into a search engine 'community river cleanup' many different examples from around can be found!

For more information click on [Calgary's River and Pathway Cleanup](#).

References:

[City of Calgary. 2012. Pathway and river cleanup](#). Last accessed 05-09-2012.

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