

**From:** Robin McLeod

**Sent:** Friday, May 30, 2008 12:14 PM

**Subject:** FW: "The Ripple" - Radiating Information - River Valleys Committee - #3

### River Valleys Committee: "The Ripple"



**Events of Significance: May 20 - 26, 2008 - Rain seven days in a row!**



25th Ave SW in Mission: the site of a future condo development, 2 levels of underground parking, 5 storeys + roof above ground, 33 living units

The question begs to be answered: "Should developments be built this close to flood-prone rivers like the Elbow?"

With the rain Calgary received last week this hole in the ground, within metres of the Elbow River, filled quickly with water. The water breached holes straight through the bank at the height of flow.

Are we putting people in unnecessary danger by allowing buildings in or so close to the floodway? Should the tax payer living on high ground have to finance the insurance claims of those people living in flood prone areas? What kind of harm are we doing to the ecological functions of rivers by building on their banks or the alluvial aquifers that feed them? After all, water is life.

The RVC Land Use and Development Committee spends a substantial amount of time reviewing Area Structure Plans and Development Permits adjacent to rivers and creeks within the City. The recommendations are typically the same - give the river/creek more space to carry out its functions for the benefit of human safety and nature. More often than not the river loses in the reviewing process. Living close to water is lucrative and desirable - when the river behaves...

Regulations concerning new development adjacent to water within the City fall under Division 3 of Land Use Bylaw 1P2007. (Go to [www.calgary.ca](http://www.calgary.ca) click on City Business, Land Use and Planning and follow the links) No building of any kind including patios, retaining walls, fences, rip rap, etc. is supposed to occur within a minimum setback of 6 metres from flood water levels in a 1 in 100 year flood event. The floodways, floodway setbacks and floodplains were determined by Alberta Environment in the 1980's. The flood stage last week may have been a 1 in 5 on the lower Elbow. In 2005 it was a 1 in 20 event. So we haven't even seen a big one yet!

According to a Calgary Herald report on May 27, a 2005 flood report including 16 flood prevention recommendations is sitting on the desk of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Honourable Ray Danyluk. With the rapid pace of development in Alberta and short but more frequent and intense storm events forecast for the prairies due to climate change, maybe the move to higher ground should happen sooner than later. For information on climate impact and adaptations on the prairies go to: <http://www.parc.ca/nacc.htm>

Looking forward - Next week is a busy week for the environment!

**[June 1 to 7, 2008: Commuter Challenge Week:](#)** Let's beat Edmonton - all you have to do is register at <http://www.commuterchallenge.ca/english/index.html> and walk, ride, skate board, roller skate, transit or car pool to work or telework at home.

**[June 3-5, 2008: The Mayor's Environmental Expo, City Hall Atrium 9:00am - 3:00pm](#)**  
The theme of the Expo this year is "Stepping up to Green: Reducing our Ecological Footprint". **River Valleys Committee** is having a booth at the Expo. It's a bit of an experiment. Come down and have a look!

**[June 4, 2008 National Clean Air Day:](http://www.cleanairday.com/)** <http://www.cleanairday.com/> Make sure you walk, ride, skate board, roller skate, transit or car pool somewhere today.

**[June 5: Alberta Water Quality Awareness Day:](http://www.awqa.ca/pages/index.php)** It is too late to register for this year's water testing of your local water body but book mark the registration dates for next year at: <http://www.awqa.ca/pages/index.php>

**Have a great weekend!**

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The River Valleys Committee works to conserve, protect and champion Calgary's rivers, creeks, wetlands and valleys.