

NEW FOR 2019 Calgary River Valleys observes two new spawning remediation projects in the Elbow River.

CRV conducted the first count of Brown Trout Redds in the Elbow River since the City of Calgary's Spawning Habitat Restoration Project in the summer of 2019, and the Government of Alberta's Fish Compensation program at Elbow Island.

This November members of CRV were joined by fish biologists, hydrology experts, high school students and members of the public to survey the Elbow River for spawning activity below the Glenmore Dam to Fort Calgary. They had the opportunity to observe the gravel replenishing that occurred in several sites below the dam and at Sandy Beach Park.

The Elbow River has historically played a significant role in the success of the Elbow and Bow River fisheries by providing spawning habitat to Rainbow and Brown Trout. These fisheries provide an excellent economic benefit to the City and Province through travel, fishing licences, and gear purchasing.

The Elbow River lacks suitable spawning gravels in multiple locations as the river bottom is predominantly large substrates and bedrock, especially since the 2013 flood. Calgary River Valleys had identified a decline in the number of Brown Trout Redds following the 2013 flood, and the relocation of Redds, as the gravel had been pushed downstream by the swiftly moving water. The purpose of the pilot project is to restore spawning habitat by adding appropriately sized gravels in particular locations below the Glenmore Dam and near Sandy Beach Park.

Success of the pilot project will be measured by Calgary River Valleys' volunteers through annual Redd Counts. The City has agreed to conduct monitoring and maintenance works post construction to assess the success of gravel replenishment through:

- Replenishment of suitable spawning substrates;
- Bank stabilization;
- Gravel mobilization along the Elbow River downstream of Glenmore Dam; and
- Potential future gravel replenishment events to maintain Elbow River spawning habitat.

The gravels being released into the river range from approximately the size of a pea to that of a baseball. Given the size and minimal level of turbidity from the cleaned gravels, the planned method of releasing without isolation reduces risk to the aquatic life in the river.

Calgary River Valleys also conducted the second annual Redd count of the Upper Elbow River Between Highway 8 and the Glencoe Golf Course, after establishing a base count in 2018.

Look for Calgary River Valleys account of the Elbow Island project and updated Redd Counts for the Lower and Upper Elbow River next month.