

Spring Citizen Science Opportunity

Calgary River Valleys is a non-profit organization dedicated to building a strong and effective voice for river valley protection and water quality in Calgary. We consider ourselves “the voice of our rivers.” In 2020 Calgary River Valleys will be working on a variety of projects, including distributing educational information about the importance of having healthy river and creek-adjacent areas, also known as riparian areas, for water quality, flood mitigation, and preventing erosion. These efforts are funded in part by a Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program grant provided by the Government of Alberta.

We will also be promoting related projects by other groups that support Calgarians’ connection to natural areas and protection of these areas. One such project we think you may want to participate in is the Calgary City Nature Challenge 2020 (<http://citynatureeyc.ca/>). It’s incredibly easy to participate, you can do it on your own, or with others, and you can be part of this world-wide Citizen Science project to document the natural world within each city that participates. If you want to learn more about the awesome power of Citizen Science, check out this short video on [YouTube](#). C’mon Calgary, you’re up for a challenge, right?

City Nature Challenge 2020: Calgary Metropolitan Region

Building on the efforts made in 2019, once again in 2020, volunteers who participate in the City Nature Challenge will see how Calgary’s urban biodiversity stacks up to cities around the world. Calgary and surrounding municipalities will be under a total bio-blitz and compete with cities such as Berlin, Cape Town, San Francisco, Halifax and 275 other cities around the world. Calgary’s goal is to gather 10,000 observations of everything wild that lives in our regional ecosystem, including Calgary, Airdrie, Cochrane, Okotoks, and Chestermere. We are trying to beat other cities around the world for bragging rights as to which city can log the most observations, the most species, and the most participants. The bonus is that every observation helps to identify our urban natural environment, which can help support land use and policy decisions to make our urban environment a better place.

How Do I Become a Citizen Scientist in the City Nature Challenge?

Nature is everywhere in the city. By mapping where nature is in the Calgary region we can build on our understanding as to why and how flora and fauna exist in certain locations in Calgary. How do you take part you ask? First, get outside and discover nature between April 24 and 27. It is as easy as walking in your own yard, your street or alley, a creek or river valley, or a local park. Then, take one or more pictures of each natural thing you find (or even record audio, such as bird calls). This can be anything from trees, shrubs, grasses, lichens, animals, bugs, and birds. If possible, take multiple pictures of the item so it can be properly identified by experts later. Finally, upload your pictures to iNaturalist.org (you can create an account for free) by midnight on May 3 and your observations will count toward Calgary’s participation in the City Nature Challenge. Once your pictures are uploaded, experts will identify the species of what you saw, which helps to build on our knowledge of urban biodiversity. The winning cities will be announced on May 4 on the global CityNatureChallenge.org website.

Contact us at CalgaryRiverValleys2@outlook.com if you would like more information about the City Nature Challenge 2020, or about Calgary River Valleys projects for this year.