

CALGARY
RIVER
VALLEYS

www.CalgaryRiverValleys.org

We are the voice of our rivers

Moving Rivers & Creeks

What Happened To The Fish Creek Pathway?



Same picnic tables adjacent to the pathway

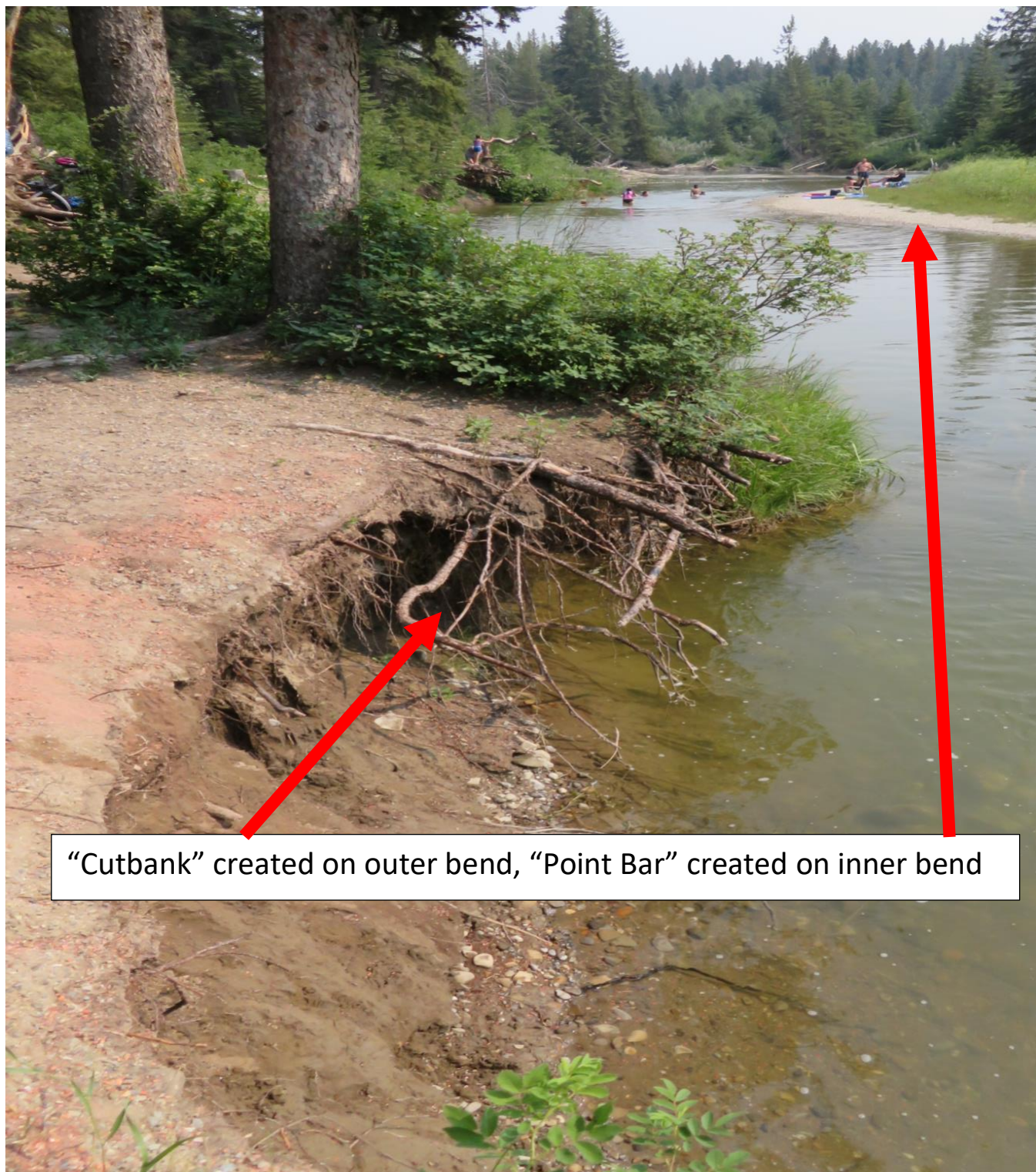
Top picture: Fish Creek Pathway north of Hull's Wood parking lot in 2011 - after being rebuilt due to being washed away in the 2005 flood (Fish Creek is out of frame to the north, on the right).



Bottom picture: Fish Creek Pathway in July 2020 – after being washed away in June 2020 by high water from several heavy rainstorms. Creek has moved south.

Why does the pathway keep getting washed away?

- **Natural movement:** creeks and rivers naturally move (meander) within their floodplain over time, especially during times of high water; branches, trees, and rocks are carried downstream during high flows and can block a creek or river channel, so the creek or river creates a new path. Creeks and rivers can also be blocked by ice dams, especially in springtime.
- **Land use:** urban development upstream leads to rainwater going into pipes and gushing into the creek, rather than absorbing into the ground or flowing slowly to the creek; as more neighbourhoods develop in Calgary there is more surface run-off that flows to our creeks and rivers.
- **Climate change:** our climate in Calgary is changing; our garden growing zone has shifted from 3A to 4A over the last several years, meaning our growing season is now hotter and longer; we are also having more intense rainstorms which results in more power in the creek for bank erosion.



“Cutbank” created on outer bend, “Point Bar” created on inner bend

Evidence the creek is moving

Fish Creek has cut into the bank on the outer bend (with faster-moving water), creating a cliff-like “cutbank”, on the north side of the creek at Bebo Grove. Downstream, on the inner bend (where there is slower-moving water), the creek is depositing gravel and sediment, creating a “point bar” or sand bar. This point bar area that the creek has moved away from is now being re-vegetated by willows and balsam poplar.