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of all components of the natural world.

City of Calgary | Mail Code : #54
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB
T2P 2M5

P.O Box 981
Station M
Calgary, AB
T2P 2K4

Re: Nature Calgary Response to the Bend in the Bow Project

Dear Mr Klimes,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed plan for the Bend in the Bow Project. As you are aware the Calgary Field Naturalists' Society, now referred to as Nature Calgary, has had a very keen interest and history in the establishment and conservation of Calgary's wonderful system of Natural Environment Parks. We have produced numerous publications over the years extolling the biodiversity values as well as the environmentally responsible enjoyment of these areas. Our volunteers have led hundreds of field trips to the various nature parks over the years providing an excellent opportunity for innumerable citizens of Calgary to experience their natural wonders.

The health and wellbeing of the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary has been a most significant concern of Nature Calgary. In 1970 members of Nature Calgary sat in the office of then Mayor Rod Sykes outlining the importance of acquiring and protecting the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary. As a result of those discussions the City did proceed with adding the Bird Sanctuary to its parks inventory. In 1987 Nature Calgary commissioned a study of the creation of a nature centre for Calgary. This identified three possible locations for a nature centre, one of which was the Bird Sanctuary. Upon its completion this study was presented to City Council. Subsequent to this presentation the Bird Sanctuary was chosen as the location for a nature centre.

The important biodiversity and conservation value of the Bird Sanctuary has also been recognized by both the federal and civic governments for many decades. The federal government recognised these values by creating the Inglewood Migratory Bird Sanctuary in 1929. In 1994 the city also recognised the Bird Sanctuary's importance by designating it as a Special Protection Natural Area in its Natural Area Management Plan. It and other management plans state:

"Where recreational use and long-term survival of significant habitats conflict, protection of the resource will take precedence" (Calgary Open Space Plan; 2003; Natural Area Management Plan, 1994; Urban Parks Master Plan, 1994).

It is especially important to follow this rule with the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary. Over the years the City has undertaken a number of initiatives to further conserve the biodiversity of the Bird Sanctuary. These include developing a designated trail system, a no feeding policy, a one point of entry system, various restricted or no access areas, acquiring the Brinks Brothers Greenhouse lands, a naturalization program for the field between the visitor centre and the Walker house as well as reclaiming the former parking lot for the Walker house and especially a well thought of volunteer stewardship program.

It is with this background in mind that Nature Calgary has the following comments regarding the proposed plan for the Bend in the Bow project.

Our overall view is that many of the proposed elements should not be allowed in the Bird Sanctuary as they will negatively impact its biodiversity and conservation values.

Specifically:

The Rivers Edge Trail

1. The trail should not extend upstream beyond the pre-flood termination point, roughly where element R5 is located on the map. This will protect elements R1 and R3. A viewing deck could be established there as previously existed there.
2. Access along the gravel bar as proposed by element R4 should not be allowed. It would be of more value as a resting area for waterfowl and migrating shore birds. Access by watercraft should not be allowed as well.
3. Element R2, playground, has no place in a Bird Sanctuary. It could be relocated on the edge of the Inglewood Wildlands. The indicated connector between the regional pathway and the R2 area should not be allowed. Only one point of entrance into the Bird Sanctuary is best to better control access.
4. The whole north field should be naturalized with balsam poplar and native shrubs and grasses. This would be in keeping with the City's Biodiversity Strategic Plan.
5. Element R7, the bird blind, could possibly be a good addition upon further study.
6. We assume that no access will be allowed to Element R8 and that the dotted yellow trail (?) on the map will not be considered.
7. Element R9 should not be allowed. It is not needed and unnecessarily impinges on the habitat security and connectivity of the area.

Lagoon Loop

1. Element L1 may be of benefit, but no access should be allowed in order to protect habitat security and connectivity. This area (the former Brinks Brothers Green House) could be planted with shrubs and trees to reconnect the forested areas on either side of the clearing. Artistic features and sawmill interpretive concepts are not in keeping with the primary goals of the Bird Sanctuary as a Special Protection Natural Area. Prince's Island was a major logging/sawmill

- area. It could feature interpretive features regarding this industry. Specific interpretative display regarding Colonel Walker lumbering and sawmill activity could be attached to the Walker House site. Perhaps the garage could host such a display.
2. The connector over the north end of the lagoon should not be considered as it would negatively impact the use of this area by the waterfowl who use the area now.
 3. Elements L2 and L3 are fine ideas.
 4. Element L4, Lookout, should not be placed at this location as the shrubs below the junction of the trail from the visitor centre and the loop trail provide good cover for birds and are often good places to look for migrating passerines.
 5. Element L5 is a nice idea. The location needs further research to provide a lower traffic nesting area for the ospreys. What impact the construction will have on the poplar woods at the site indicated should also be considered.
 6. Element L7, outdoor classroom, should not have been approved. It increases the human footprint where it is not needed. It will reduce the habitat security of the area next to the protected south area and disrupt the connectivity. The Walker house can act as a third classroom as it traditionally was the classroom at the Bird Sanctuary. It has washroom facilities etc. It should have been put to public comment before approval. Also the carrying capacity of the Bird Sanctuary with regards to the number of classes operating within the Bird Sanctuary must be addressed. This is in regards to the impact they have on the avifauna as well as the enjoyment of other visitors to the Bird Sanctuary. Perhaps a better site would have been the Pearce Estate area.
 7. Elements L8 and L9 are fine.

Homestead Trail

All elements of this area should not be considered except the existing H1 and H4. The field between the visitor centre should be retained as a naturalized area. Perhaps islands of native shrubs and trees could be added to attract additional native species of grassland or shrub land birds. If Richardson Ground Squirrels were encouraged to live there, it would be attractive as a feeding area for Swainson's and Red-tailed Hawks that have nested in the Bird Sanctuary.

Fully enclosing this entire area with fencing will provide a suitable environment for ground nesting birds. Signs posted outward on the west fence could be used to provide information about the history of this area.

A tall perching structure for raptors could be considered for this area. Element H9, the market garden, could be incorporated in the northern edge of the wildlands area or perhaps the former Robinson vegetable garden north of the Walker house could perform that function. The blue trail system (other than the existing portion of the trail from the visitor centre) must not be allowed as it would only serve to further degrade the habitat security and increase the habitat fragmentation of the area.

Wildlands

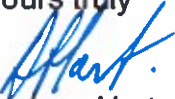
Nature Calgary would like to endorse Element W7 which is to naturalize the south end of the wildlands. It would prove to be quite complementary to the protection mandate of the Bird Sanctuary. Would it be possible to restore Element W4 as a wetland? It was a good place for waterfowl and pond study in the past, and should be restored.

In summary the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary has been a most important conservation area within Calgary's Natural Environment Parks system. The fact that it is a Federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary and the highest ranked natural area in the City is testament to that fact.

In this regards the City must be commended for their past efforts in maintaining the biodiversity of the area. It is Nature Calgary's belief that the incorporation of many of the elements proposed by the plan, as outlined above, would seriously undermine those efforts.

There is no need to try and make it be all things to all people. In the final analysis its name speaks to what its mandate has been as first envisioned by Selby Walker and that it should continue to be the INGLEWOOD BIRD SANCTUARY.

Yours truly



Andrew Hart
President, Nature Calgary

president@naturecalgary.com