

# Calgary's Natural Parks

YOURS TO EXPLORE



Jim Foley

CALGARY FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

## Buy your copy today!

The Calgary Field Naturalist Society is proud to present "Calgary's Natural Parks; Yours to Explore".

This book will introduce you to 21 Calgary parks, describing their natural and human history. The author then leads you on guided walking tours through the major natural habitats. Maps with stopping points accompany the text, so you will always know where you are.

Calgary's amazing natural parks are yours to explore; venture out and enjoy them today!

### About the Calgary Field Naturalists' Society

CFNS, now known as Nature Calgary, is a non-profit charitable society that has evolved along with the City of Calgary. From its origins as the Calgary Bird Club, Nature Calgary has grown into a vibrant organization of over 600 members. Its mission is to encourage the appreciation, observation, study, conservation and protection of all components of the natural world. E-mail: [cfns@cfns.fanweb.ca](mailto:cfns@cfns.fanweb.ca), Website: [www.naturecalgary.com](http://www.naturecalgary.com)



#### Location and Access

The Sanctuary is bounded on the west by Sanctuary Road and the Ingleswood Wildlands; on the north, east and south by the Bow River. Parking is available directly off 19 Avenue SE at Sanctuary Road.

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Ingleswood Bird Sanctuary — The Flagship

### INGLEWOOD BIRD SANCTUARY

The Flagship

Ingleswood Bird Sanctuary may not be the largest municipal natural environment park in Calgary, but it is most certainly the flagship. In 1970, largely through the efforts and encouragement of the Calgary Bird Club (the predecessor of the Calgary Field Naturalists' Society) the City purchased 33 hectares for an "educational nature reserve." The sanctuary now receives the highest level of protection in the municipal park system and has a major nature interpretation centre. Dogs are not allowed, not even on a leash, as their presence will frighten wildlife. With recent acquisitions of adjoining properties, the Ingleswood Bird Sanctuary has grown to more than 37 hectares.

Prior to becoming a municipal park, the area played an important role in Calgary's human history. But because the area has not had a detailed archaeological survey, we have less evidence of Aboriginal use than in some other parks. The first European to settle the area was Colonel James Walker. He named his estate "Ingleswood" and built a substantial house on the site. The house, which is now used as a residence and administrative office, has been designated a provincial historic site. Walker was a very prominent citizen. In 1975, almost four decades after his death, he was named by the City of Calgary as "Citizen of the Century."

James Walker and his son, Selby, were both active conservationists. James had been instrumental in establishing Banff National Park and Selby had fought, unfortunately unsuccessfully, against a later reduction in its size. Selby later founded and served as Executive Director of the National Parks Association. In 1929, he had 24 hectares of the Walker Estate designated a federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary. After Selby's death in 1955, the property was sold to Ed Jeffries, a local businessman who was primarily interested in the gravel deposits. Fortunately, the gravel was never mined in large quantities.

Jeffries, in turn, leased some of the property to the Alberta Fish and Game Association, which operated a pleasure rafting facility. In 1965, The Fish and Game Association moved its offices and the property fell into a state of neglect. Since the City purchased the property in 1970, much has been accomplished both by the municipal government and hundreds of volunteers. So please take time to visit Ingleswood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary's flagship natural environment park.

#### Geologic Features

The Ingleswood Bird Sanctuary sits in a cove of the Bow River. The main geologic feature is a post-glacial gravel deposit overlain by a very thin layer of flood silt and soil. There are three levels or terraces in the sanctuary, each representing the bottom of an ancient, higher, river course. The current vegetation is different on each of the terraces, thus roughly defining the major habitats.

Walker House, photo: Chris Hayward

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See Park Map on page 134.

Calgary's Natural Parks

### Exploring Carburn Park

**Starting point:** Parking lot [P] at the end of Riverview Drive SE.

**Distance:** Approximately 3.8 kilometres.

**Time:** Allow 1½ to 2 hours.

**Comments:** The trails and pathways are very easy with gentle slopes. You can shorten the tour by taking a shortcut back between stops 4 and 8.

From the parking lot go to the entrance exhibit

- 1 The entrance exhibit provides additional information about the park's history. Turn left toward the car turnaround and follow the trail into the woods bearing left to a small wooden bridge (#1027).
- 2 Look down the Bow River to the Eric Harvie footbridge, which takes you across to Southland Park. (Eric Harvie was a major Calgary philanthropist who founded the Glenbow Museum.) Behind you is a backwater of the Bow River, now an extension of the park's man-made-pond network. Listen for Yellow Warblers, Least Flycatchers and White-throated Sparrows. Continue along the trail using the first left fork toward the river. Go about 100 metres to an apparent inlet of the river.
- 3 In the warmer months, notice the brilliant green algae and how the water appears to be coming from an underground source. In fact, the water source is more likely a side channel of the river flowing through the gravel below the surface. Look for Ring-necked Pheasants. These birds were introduced into Alberta for sport hunting. Follow the trail along the river until it curves through the woods and comes to a junction with a wide trail (The trail is on the right-of-way for a gas pipeline.) Turn right onto the wide trail and go about 100 metres to another junction. (There is a "no dog" sign to the right.) Turn left and follow the trail past a playground until it joins the Regional Pathway.
- 4 You are now at the first pond. According to the Oxford Canadian Dictionary, a pond is "a fairly small body of still water formed naturally or by hollowing, embanking, etc." The definition fits perfectly as this body of water was sculpted when Burco finished the gravel extraction and vacated the area. Look around in this area for the brilliant orange and black Baltimore Oriole. Turn left onto the Regional Pathway and go to a junction with another branch of the Regional Pathway. If you want to shorten the tour, turn right and follow the Regional Pathway back to the parking lot. Otherwise, turn left and go a few metres to a Y-junction with a trail leading to the left onto a narrow strip of land between the river and another pond.



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