



Calgary Fish & Game Association

McKinnon Flats Capital Improvement Projects

Alberta Parks McKinnon Flats Master Plan identified infrastructure improvements that would be needed to achieve the full recreational potential for the property. The first project is an all-weather road to meet year-round use. This \$2 Million project is planned for completion in 2020. Along with year-round use there comes a need to address containment of vehicle traffic within designated roadways and parking lots. There is also a need to enhance the protection of wildlife habitat, historical and archaeologically important sites. Pathways and trails for pedestrian, horse, and bike activities are also needed.

The focus of this document is to address Priority 1 Capital Improvement Projects at the river edge, parking, and the historical homestead site (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Priority 1 Development Sites

1. River Access Site:

The focus of site improvements is to contain vehicles into a designated river access staging area and restrict access to the downstream river edge gravel bar. The existing parking lot has 12 truck/trailer parking stalls and sufficient space for approximately 20 single-use vehicles. Although there is an overflow parking lot (Figure 1), it is rarely used due to a lack of maintenance. Overflow from the river access parking has moved to the downstream gravel bar. Day use at the site has increased in recent years and the new road will increase it further. Therefore, the river access sites need to be reconfigured into a boat staging area and short-term parking with the long-term parking needs moved to the expanded overflow parking site. We see some opposition from the



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river boat community to park truck/trailer units further away from the river but is needed to maintain vehicle access containment at the site.

The reconfiguration of the river access site (Figure 2) will consist of a designated river access laneway from the parking lot to the river edge. The distance of which will change during seasonal highs and lows in river flow. Therefore, any vehicle containment barricade will need to be not only restrictive to vehicle access but capable of resisting the ravages of high-water flow. The use of concrete blocks partially embedded in the ground has been successful at other Bow River boat ramps but may need to be upgraded to a heavier sandstone or granite rocks at this site. The river access laneway width will need to be wide enough to allow a truck-trailer to drive in, turn around, and back into the river. Future improvements would have a more formal roundabout staging area in what are now the truck-trailer parking stalls.



Figure 2 - River Access Site Improvements

Development Costs: will be dependent on regulatory requirements to complete the instream Water Act compliance guidelines and application. When this project was discussed with the Policeman’s Flats engineering consultants it was felt that this application would fall under similar guidelines to what was used at Policeman’s Flats. That is, maintenance and enhancement of a previously damaged provincial river access infrastructure. Excavation costs will depend heavily on the proposed scope of the excavation and materials used for the barricade.

Engineering and Water Act approval -	\$15,000 to 20,000
Excavation & Install Barrier -	\$5,000 to \$10,000



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2. Parking Lot:

The existing overflow parking lot site needs to be reconfigured to accommodate 20 or more truck-trailer units and an equal number of single vehicle units (Figure 3). Traditionally, a designated stall configuration is used, but an open area design has been reasonably successful at the upstream Policeman’s Flats river access site and lends itself to expansion in the future. Upgrades could consist of park benches and garbage bins.



Figure 3 Expanded Parking lot

As discussed previously, future parking needs would suggest that the existing river access site should be modified to accommodate an expanded staging area that would move the majority of the parking to the expanded parking lot. Examples of this design are illustrated in Figure 4 – Fish Creek Provincial Park Boat Ramp and Figure 5 – The City of Calgary West Baker Park Ramp.



Figure 4 Fish Creek Boat Ramp



Figure 5 West Baker Park Boat Ramp



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Development Costs: will be dependent on regulatory requirements for excavation of the parking lot that is on a flood plain, but to our knowledge is above the 100 year flood projection level. Using Policeman’s Flats parking lot excavation as a guideline, standard excavation guidelines would likely apply. Nevertheless, an engineering consultant would need to oversee the project to meet whatever regulations requirements are needed.

Engineering Consultant - \$ 3,000 to 5,000

Excavation Open Plan Design - \$5,000 to \$8,000

Project Considerations: It is not clear just how far the new road construction will extend into both the parking lot and river access development sites. Also, what grade material will be removed or added to the road construction site. It is expected that large sandstone rocks will be excavated from the road construction site that should remain on site and used for the vehicle access restrictions and barricades.

If it was possible to complete the river access and parking lot enhancement projects at the same time, and in conjunction with the road construction, there could be substantial cost savings.

3. Homestead:

There is a need to prepare a development plan to recognize the historical importance of the McKinnon family as pioneer ranchers on the Canadian plains. The significance of the LK Ranch homestead site should be recognized for the important contribution it made to the winter feeding regimes of range cattle.

The homestead site (Figure 6) has the potential for redevelopment into a western heritage interpretation center. Security of the site and funding opportunities need careful consideration before a development commitment can be put in place.

