

The following is one of six projects that took place during the summer of 2010 as part of the [Celebration of the Bow River](#) 2010 event. This series of temporary public art interventions gave citizens and visitors of Calgary the opportunity to celebrate and reflect upon the precious Bow River.

Passages

Artist – Peter Von Tiesenhausen

The Project

Passages by Alberta artist Peter Von Tiesenhausen kicked off Celebration of the Bow River on June 12, 2010 at Douglasbank Park in southeast Calgary. Von Tiesenhausen was joined by community members who released 100 hand-carved wooden boats into the Bow River.



Von Tiesenhausen considered connections among life and water cycles, stewardship, consciousness and spirit by launching the wooden boats into the river. The journey downstream highlighted our connection to the Bow, its upstream and downstream watershed and the life forms supported it. Each boat captured the spirit of a human figure that drew on ideas of the cycle of life and death, and the journey through one's existence.



The project culminated in September 2010 during Culture Month with an event featuring a print exhibition and an artist's talk on the project and how the Bow River connects us to our landscape and each other.

The Artist

Peter Von Tiesenhausen is well-known on the national art scene with his inventive and widely-praised environmental and site-specific works, carved wood sculptures, drawings and videos.

With his use of primarily organic materials and his frequent practice of abandoning his outdoor sculptures to the forces of nature, his work is frequently read as eco-art. This is only partly the case, since his themes probe the intrinsic relationship between humans and nature.

Testimonials

Today, while canoeing the Bow River, from Douglasdale to McKinnon's Flats, we found two of the boats. We weren't aware of what they were all about so, after finding the website, we took note of it and put the boats back in the river. It's a nice idea for people to share their stories of finding the boats to see where they travelled.

- Nicole Bourgeois

On June 13th while fishing the Bow River at Fish Creek Park, my son and I found 2 of the boats, #4 and #43. We were unaware of what they were until reading the article in the newspaper the next day. My son was able to take them to school today to show the class, and share the story. Thank-you Peter, for taking the time to create such wonderful pieces of art, and to help us to be more aware of the "connections."

- *Brian and Brett Parliament*

Found one of Peter's boats [on] May 25, 2011 on north bank gravel bar of Bow River approximately 500 meters downstream from confluence of Highwood River. Number is worn but looks like it is #83. Boat is on display at the fishing camp of the Ostium Exploration Society near where it was found. Congratulations to all for an excellent public art event.

- *Richard Bronstein, Life Chairman, Ostium Exploration society*



While walking with a friend on one of the first nice spring days we came across 2 of these boats. We were unsure what they were about so I decided to check the website to find out. To be honest, we thought they might be some sort of memorial to people who had passed. It seemed like an interesting find, especially since we found them just south of Carseland Alberta by Carseland Wyndham Provincial Park. I threw the boats back to the middle of the river to continue their journey. Very neat concept. These boats may show up further and further down river for a long time to come.

- *M.Y.*

(*Boat was found on May 11, 2011.*)

Greetings! On the late evening of June 17th I decided after a long days work to take my young yellow lab Rusty down to the river at the bottom of 194th Street SE, at the backside of Chaparral. After he chased a big fat beaver down the Bow we ran into this boat floating on the edge of the river side, number 35. We noticed the website on the back and so decided to hold onto it. This is definitely a keeper... after this weather we've been having just about everything but the kitchen sink has been finding its way down the Bow, it's nice (and neat) to find such a boat, it will be in my garage sitting on a shelf for all to see! Thank you.

- *Patrick Nichols*

We found boat number 88 drifting in a back eddy on Saturday, June 12, 2010 at around 3:00 pm downstream of Policeman's Flats. My 6 year old daughter Hanna was landing a beautiful 23 inch Rainbow trout when we spotted the boat floating in the water. After we released the nice trout we picked up the boat and brought it home with us. It inspired my 7 year old son Zachary, to want to carve a boat of his own, so on Sunday we walked to the elbow river looking for the perfect piece of wood. He has just completed his first working boat of his own. As a family we truly appreciate the clean waterways that run through our city and we want to see it remain that way. Thanks for the art work and the great idea.

- *Mark Jonker*