

Reader's Rock Garden (Upgrades)

City of Calgary, 2016

Ion has a long history of designing irrigation for this historic park, beginning with the mainline design in 2004. Since then, Ion has designed the irrigation system(s) for the main site, West slope, entry road, and most recently the upgrades to the water feature 'top-up' system and manual watering control.

In recent years, Reader's Rock Garden had been having problems with flooding their lower water feature as it is fed by water that drains from the upper pool. It seems the lower water feature was constantly overflowing, and the City was experiencing difficulty with the monitoring equipment. The City used this as an opportunity to update their manual watering control system and to re-seal the upper pond and associated water channel.

Ion worked with City of Calgary Parks Water Management to design a new monitoring system that would communicate with the Motorola Irrigation Central Control network used by the City. Due to the historic nature of the park, the overriding mandate was to keep the park in original condition. Any modern components installed in the park itself would have to be discreet so as not to take away from the original intent of William Reader.

The complicated part of this type of a project is to strategically locate all of the infrastructure components so they don't detract from the park aesthetics. Any disturbance to the planting beds had to be minimal so pipe and wire routing had to be carefully considered. Crossing paths with pipe or wire requires photos to be taken so the stones can be replaced in their exact original position before excavation.

A follow-up with City of Calgary Parks Water Management indicates that the system is working as designed; the lower water feature is no longer flooding and the site maintenance staff are fully satisfied with the new manual watering system.

