

Dragon back to the water

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The event almost didn't happen, but hundreds of people lined the banks of the Glenmore Reservoir to watch the 2008 Calgary Community Dragon Boat Race and Festival yesterday.

After the city revoked the Alberta Dragon Boat Foundation's permit in February, the Topmade Dragon Boat Club, as well as volunteers, sponsors and boating groups, took on the challenge of resurrecting the 16-year tradition.

Despite the somewhat last-

minute decision to keep the race alive, there was an outpouring of participation and support from the Calgary community, said race director Kevin Kwan.

"There is so much support for this event; we've had amazing volunteers and tons of spectators — in fact, some of them were here this morning at 9 a.m., cheering like someone had just handed out free shots of espresso," he said.

"People have been out paddling hard for their teams, their kids, their friends and it's been awesome."

Marilyn Bodrug went down

to the reservoir to watch her daughter and daughter-in-law compete for the second year in a row. She said not having the event would have felt strange.

"I'm really glad it came together," she said. "It would have been sad if they couldn't race again this year."

For Jackie Sadoway, a four-time member of the Sistership breast cancer survivor team who was recently re-diagnosed with the disease, having the race to participate in with her teammates was an incredible experience.

"For me to be on that boat

with those women ... it just means there's hope and so much love," she said, tearing up. "This event brings us closer together — we're sisters, we're family."

The 45 women who made up Sistership's two boats watched as 23 doves were released in memory of the teammates they've lost to breast cancer over their 11-years of racing and tossed roses into the water during an emotional ceremony yesterday.

Approximately 55 teams competed in this weekend's two-day competition, which wrapped up yesterday.