Awareness to Action

A Showcase of Environmental Stewardship in Alberta

Alberta Stewardship Network

"Stewards helping stewards care for the environment"

Providing Alberta's stewards with a network that facilitates information exchange, provides support, and recognizes the contribution of individuals, communities and organizations in advancing environmental stewardship on a watershed basis.

We extend our appreciation to the following people for their contributions to this booklet:

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Technical and In-Kind Support: Margaret Glasford, Alberta Stewardship Network; Kim Dacyk, Federation of Alberta Naturalists; Lisa Fox, Cochrane Environmental Action Committee; Tim Giese, Branches and Banks Environmental Foundation; Gabrielle Kosmider, Fisheries and Oceans Canada; Sarah Primeau, Land Stewardship Centre of Canada; Petra Rowell, Alberta Environment; Diana Rung, Alberta Conservation Association; Kelsey Spicer-Rawe, Cows and Fish.

Funding for this document was graciously provided by:

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This publication may be cited as:
Alberta Stewardship Network. 2007. Awareness to Action: A Showcase of Environmental Stewardship in Alberta. Edmonton, Alberta. 66 pp.

ISBN 978-0-9783497-0-7

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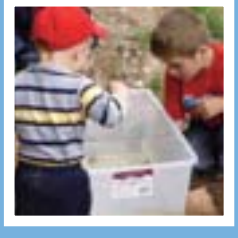


What's in the "Stew" of Stewardship?

Lorne Fitch, P. Biol.
Provincial Riparian Specialist
Cows and Fish

"We protect what we love; we love what we understand; we understand what we are taught."

Those words begin to touch on the complexity of a term "stewardship" that grows in importance, timeliness and necessity, for the sustainability of our economy, our families and our communities. It is a complex relationship, like a robust stew, that embodies protection, love, understanding and education. The stories within this publication begin to grasp those, and other ingredients.

Our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents may not have recognized the term "stewardship" but that doesn't mean they didn't think about and act on conserving things. For them conservation was a survival skill. We are at a critical stage in Alberta's history; we are relearning some of those conservation skills. Alberta as a frontier is gone but there is an ever growing expectation of what Alberta can provide. We are currently one or two sizes too big in our wants and no amount of tailoring will expand the earth's resources to match our waistlines. Stewardship is the act of moving the goal post from short-term economic gain and self-interest to long-term sustainability and altruism. It's getting over the hurdle of everyone worried about their share to everyone thinking about doing their bit. Embodied in the disparity between what we want from the earth and what we need are the elements that could help us understand the concept of stewardship.

Stewardship doesn't have a recipe, or a formula. It's more of a thinking pathway, a set of elements, extending from today's awareness to tomorrow's actions.

The elements of stewardship are three-fold.

1. The first is **awareness**, achieving a level of understanding or knowledge, which provides the foundation for the next two.

2. The second is the development of an **ethic** - an encoded set of responsibilities and obligations to care for land, water and air as part of our conscience.

3. The third is **action**, exhibiting appropriate choice, which embodies balance, restraint and a sense of legacy.

Aldo Leopold, the dean of ecological thinking, provided a thoughtful perspective on the need for stewardship. In 1938 he said:

"We end, I think, at what might be called the standard paradox of the 20th century: our tools are better than we are, and grow better faster than we do. They suffice to crack the atom, to command the tides. But they do not suffice for the oldest task in human history: to live on a piece of land without spoiling it."

The examples in this publication are of people, organizations and initiatives who, in Leopold's terms, have figured out how to live on a piece of land without spoiling it by using the elements of stewardship. We need to look at these, because in a world of theory what we lack are practical examples. One person practicing stewardship is better than fifty preaching it! These examples are key to the development, delivery and support of other stewardship initiatives because they provide lessons and insights. They epitomize, to me, stewardship in action and are inspirational. They all share the three elements of stewardship: ecological awareness; a strong sense of a land ethic; and action - making choices appropriate for today with an eye on tomorrow.

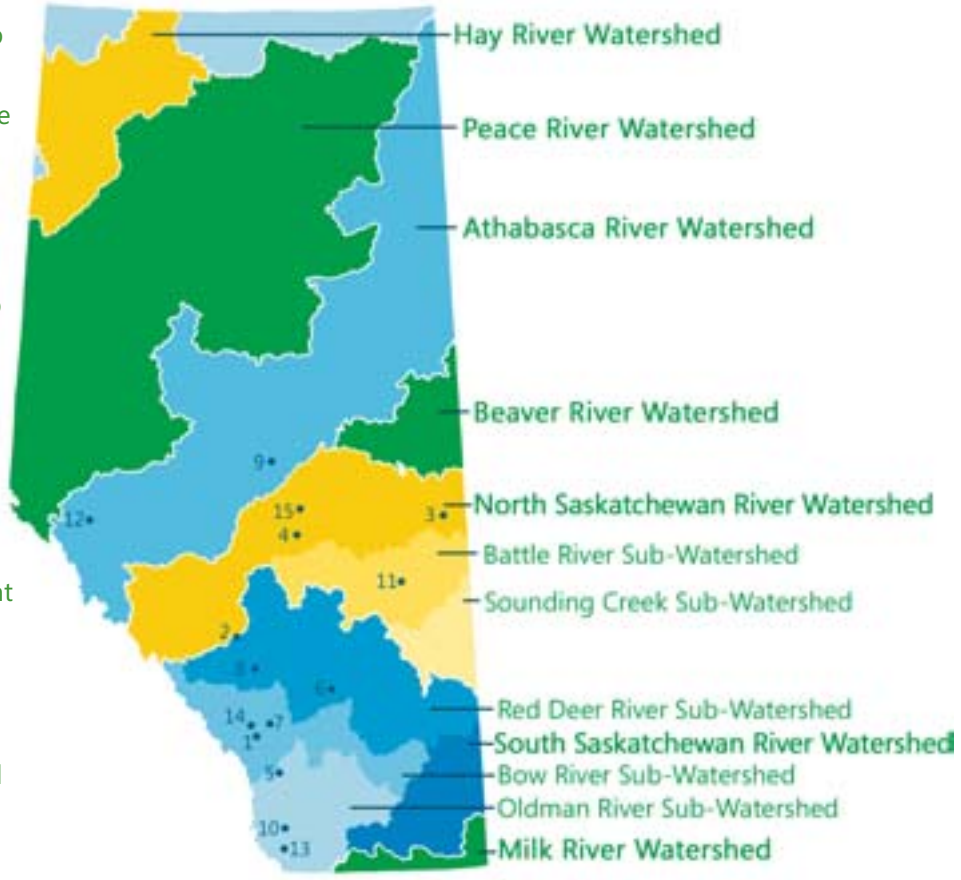
Pat Graham, former director of the Montana Department of Game, Fish and Parks, said:

"Two of the most important gifts we can give our children are the ability to use information to make wise decisions and a quality environment in which there are still choices left to be made."

That statement is an articulate summary of the importance of stewardship. Achieving stewardship will not occur through magic, wishing or hand wringing; it will happen through the concerted efforts of all of us. Most of us live and recreate in the settled portion of the province, which is mainly privately-owned land. We are sustained by these landscapes, and we are troubled by their declining health and biodiversity. Stewardship - an amalgam of awareness, ethics and action - is the best chance we have if we wish to make the wise decisions of today that secure the choices for tomorrow.

Project Locations

1. Elbow River Watershed Partnership
2. Rocky Riparian Group
3. Vermilion River Watershed Initiative
4. Wizard Lake Watershed & Lake Stewardship Association
5. Cayley School
6. Rosebud River Watershed Partners
7. Nose Creek Watershed Partnership
8. Little Red Deer River Watershed Initiative
9. Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Association & Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society
10. Beaver Creek Watershed Group
11. Iron Creek Watershed Improvement Society
12. West Athabasca Watershed Bioregional Society
13. Pincher Creek Watershed Group
14. Branches and Banks Environmental Foundation
15. City of St. Albert



Telling the Tale of a River

Elbow River Watershed Partnership

Our Story

From the foothills and the front ranges of the Canadian Rockies, to the urban landscape of Calgary, the Elbow River watershed comprises parts of the Kananaskis Improvement District, the Tsuu T'ina Nation, the MD of Rocky View and the City of Calgary. The passage from the headwaters to the confluence with the Bow River is relatively quick, as the Elbow River drops more than 1 km in its 120 km journey beginning at Elbow Lake. The watershed encompasses greater than 1,200 km^2 and is sandwiched on either end with unique land uses and pressures. Growing recreation and tourism demands exist in the headwaters, while at its downstream end, the Elbow River is one source of drinking water for the City of Calgary (roughly one in every six Albertans).

> "Working together for ample clean water for the benefit of all."
>
> - the vision of the Elbow River Watershed Partnership

Managing and protecting water quality, water quantity, and the aquatic environment within watersheds is a complex task. Mix in land development and land use changes and the task of managing a watershed for sustainability and health becomes even more complex. Faced with all these concerns and due to its location in the province, the Elbow River watershed is at a tipping point. Additional negative impacts on the water within this watershed may result in further deterioration, seen as unacceptable by landowners, users, and the public. As a result, in 2001 the Elbow River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) was established to increase awareness of water issues and encourage cooperation, coordination, and knowledge sharing among stakeholders and focus on restoring and maintaining watershed health.

Our Project

Believing that "our rivers are an expression of our landscape" the Elbow River Watershed Partnership; Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture and the Friends of Kananaskis Country partnered to create a **Youth Field Study Program** focused around water quality. Students are challenged to discover the Elbow River watershed and predict the "Tale of the Elbow River." They are given the opportunity to monitor the River from the relatively pristine waters of Cobble Flats in Kananaskis Country to the City of Calgary. Travelling by bus, students stop at three locations and test water for dissolved oxygen, nitrates, phosphates, pH, turbidity, temperature, and aquatic invertebrates. They also visit points where various land uses can be observed and discussed. Students learn about the physical, chemical, and social characteristics of the Elbow River watershed and recognize the connection between land use and water quality. Teachers are provided with pre-trip activities designed to prepare students for the field program (e.g. introduction to the watershed, equipment and procedures) and post-trip activities to conclude the program (e.g. analyzing and discussing the data and promotion of student action and stewardship). This outdoor learning experience for students in the Elbow River watershed meets the needs of the Grade 8 and 9 science curriculum, promotes student action and development of a stewardship ethic. In addition, the Field Study Program addresses Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture - Parks and Protected Areas' goals of preservation, outdoor recreation, heritage appreciation, and heritage tourism.

Achievements

Nearly 1,000 students have taken part in the Field Study Program. Positive feedback from both students and teachers reinforces the interest in outdoor learning opportunities. Comments from teachers have included, "You have no idea how much this relates to the curriculum," and "The program provided hands-on field activities for my students that allowed many to feel like 'real scientists' for the first time in their lives."

Challenges	Solutions
Overwhelming success! The full-day field study is facilitated by an environmental education intern. However, a single intern can no longer meet the growing demand for the program.	Friends of Kananaskis Country is considering hiring an additional intern to meet growing demand and increase their capacity to deliver the program.
Transportation costs.	The ERWP is seeking funding to help offset these costs.
Weather (snow/rain) and flooding can limit access to sites, damage equipment, and increase potential safety risks for students.	The program is delivered in May and June to reduce the chance of encountering adverse weather. However, scheduling can be a problem since final exams are held in June.

Success Strategies

Strong, healthy partnerships among Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture - Parks and Protected Areas, Friends of Kananaskis Country, and the ERWP have been key to the development and success of the Field Study Program. Each partner is committed to the program and shares the various responsibilities for its delivery, including fundraising, hiring and training interns, and evaluating and reassessing program needs.

Outcomes

- Nearly 1,000 students, ages 13 and 14, have taken part in the program over two years.
- Fifteen schools and 34 classrooms have participated in the past two years.
- Eleven urban and four rural schools have participated in the program.
- In 2007 the program is expanding to serve twice as many classes.

Investing in Stewardship

Financial contributions from Alberta Ecotrust, Alberta Environment, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, the ERWP, and Friends of Kananaskis Country for the program's first complete year of operation (2005) totalled $30,140 with an additional $6,200 provided in-kind by Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture and Sustainable Resource Development. The Alberta Stewardship Network provided a grant in 2006.

Base funding for the ERWP is provided by the Bow River Basin Council, the City of Calgary, and the Municipal District of Rocky View. The remaining funds are raised by a part-time coordinator for the Elbow River Watershed Partnership.

Contact Us

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Cows & Creeks - The Best for Both

Rocky Riparian Group

Our Story

Straddling the boundaries of the North and South Saskatchewan River basins and sharing borders with both Jasper and Banff National Parks lies Clearwater County. It's a municipality chock-full of headwater streams, with spawning grounds for many of Alberta's sport fish. It is also the focus of agriculture, industry, forestry, oil and gas, recreation, and a home for 11,500 Albertans.

Beginning as an agency-led initiative in the year 2000, the Rocky Riparian Group has evolved over the years to become a landowner and community-based team working together to promote healthy watersheds in Clearwater County. Diverse membership is key to the success of the Rocky Riparian Group, with 18 agency and organization members and over a dozen farm family members. Throughout the years the group has been busy sharing the positive story of agriculture and the environment through newsletters, tours, facilitating on-farm projects and hosting events.

The diverse membership of the Rocky Riparian Group promotes healthy watersheds by providing producers and others with hands-on solutions that demonstrate how sustainable agriculture can benefit both landowners and the environment

Our Project

Cows and Creeks - The Best for Both is a unique awareness event that features both a trade show and presentations on a specific riparian management theme each year for the past six years. It begins with a barbecue lunch to lure people in, and finishes with a homestyle dinner. The afternoon and evening sessions are split between time dedicated to "kickin' the tires and shootin' the breeze" at the trade show and information sessions where keynote speakers and local producers share their stories of sustainable management solutions. While the delicious meals may entice the crowd, it's the practical hands-on solutions that the audience takes home with them.

Achievements

A colorful, original, hand-drawn logo adds a sense of recognition or "branding" to the event, while eye-catching and humorous presentation titles, such as "Black Gold in New Duds" (Environmental Liabilities Surrounding Fuel Storage) or "Money in that Muck" (Nutrients Can Give a Monetary Return Rather Than Being an Environmental Liability), keep the audience coming back year after year.

Offering both the trade show and information sessions together allows landowners to learn about successful management strategies and to view the tools ("kick the tires") involved in those strategies. Much of the information is presented by local landowners - farmers and ranchers sharing their successes with other farmers and ranchers. In this peer-based format, landowners share up-front information on costs, benefits, successes and failures associated with particular management strategies. The presentations demonstrate that sustainable agricultural management options can be win-win solutions for both the landowner and the environment.

Challenges	Solutions
Timing of the event proves difficult in years when winter is long or spring is early.	Flexible scheduling allows room to move. Although it is an annual event, the date selected varies with the weather and other local activities.
Peaking the interest of local residents each year for this annual event can be tricky.	Each year, an overarching theme is selected, and is different from previous years to ensure information is new, fresh and intriguing.
Keeping topics focused on agriculture and watersheds is difficult when there is so much else going on in the area such as forestry and oil and gas.	The Rocky Riparian Group is dedicated to keeping farmers and ranchers their target audience. A clear mandate helps to keep the group focused.

Success Strategies

Maintaining a consistent theme - "Cows and Creeks - The Best for Both" - is one key ingredient to the success of this event. Emphasis is placed on the fact that cattle and riparian areas can exist in harmony.

Focusing on economic benefits of sustainable management practices and emphasizing the win-win philosophy of these changes helps to boost audience numbers and increase the audience's receptivity to suggestions.

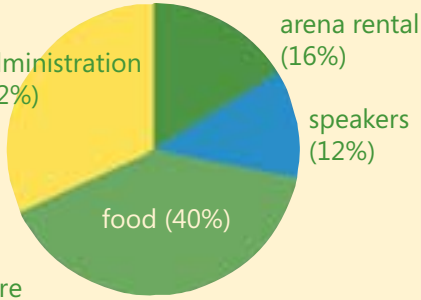
Outcomes

- More than 500 in attendance at the tradeshow and presentations over the last six years.
- More than 30 producer stories shared in presentations at the event over the last six years.
- Membership in the Rocky Riparian Group has grown from six in 2000 to over 25 agency, organization and farm family members in 2006.

Investing in Stewardship

Cash
$2,500 (in 2006)

In-kind
$3,970 (in 2006)



Cash and in-kind dollars come from a variety of sources including the Rocky Riparian Group members, local businesses, trade-show participants and feature organizations or agencies whose specialties are the focus of that year's agenda. For example, in 2006, the Land Stewardship Centre of Canada granted the Rocky Riparian Group $2,000 towards the event. In an attempt to show the value of the event, a registration fee is charged, which helps to cover costs of the lunch and dinner.

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Life and Times of the Vermilion River

Vermilion River Watershed Initiative

Our Story

Situated in east-central Alberta, the Vermilion River begins its meandering journey near the town of Holden in Beaver County and crosses three municipal boundaries before emptying into the North Saskatchewan River near the Alberta - Saskatchewan border. As it crosses many jurisdictional boundaries, the Vermilion River also crosses ecological boundaries. In the west, the watershed is characterized by clusters of aspen and willow in the grasslands of the Central Parkland. In the east, the presence of spruce signals a transition to the Dry Boreal Mixedwood Natural Region. The Vermilion River is primarily fed by groundwater and precipitation (snow and rain).

In 2003, community-based stewardship activities were becoming fairly common across Alberta, and the Vermilion River watershed was no exception. In September 2003 a survey was sent to residents of the three major municipalities in the watershed, to solicit input and interest in the formation of a watershed initiative. This was followed by a series of information sessions and workshops, at which point a group of local residents and agency representatives came together to start the Vermilion River Watershed Initiative (VRWI).

The Life and Times of the Vermilion River presentation blends history and ecology in a manner that captivates people with the goal of stimulating residents to continue with watershed stewardship actions.

Our Project

Bringing people together so that they could begin talking and seeking common ground was a challenge. The VRWI also struggled to know where to start since the watershed and the issues within it were so diverse. They decided to look to history to guide them, as history has a way of getting people's attention and opening up dialogue about the past, present and future. Cows and Fish (Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society) suggested intertwining ecological and historical narratives to tell the stories of the Vermilion River watershed. Thus the **Life and Times of the Vermilion River** presentation was born.

The Life and Times of the Vermilion River presentation blends human history with ecological knowledge in a non-technical, non-threatening manner. The goal of the Life and Times presentation is to motivate local community-based watershed work. It served as a first step in bringing diverse people together, including the Vermilion River Naturalist Society, County of Minburn, County of Vermilion River, and Lakeland College, agriculture producers and urban residents.

Achievements

The presentation of the Life and Times of the Vermilion River in 2004 sparked one of the largest meetings in the watershed to date. It was a catalyst to bring people together to begin developing a common vision for the watershed. A low-level flight of the watershed was necessary to obtain the image base for the presentation, providing the VRWI with over 300 present day aerial images from the headwaters of the Vermilion River to the confluence with the North Saskatchewan River. Historical information, both anecdotal and recorded (e.g. photographs) was collected to build the presentation, painting a priceless picture of the watershed's past. The information tells the story of pioneer hardships, First Nation conflicts and landscape formation. It gives a view of today's watershed, with examples of the issues and challenges, creating a presentation unique to the Vermilion River watershed.

Since then, the VRWI has hosted several successful education and awareness activities and events. Though some of the original members have moved on, there is still a core group of agricultural producers involved. They provide direction on activities and topics, engage each other in discussion about practical solutions, and attend events to learn more.

Challenges	Solutions
Large geographic area.	Working within watershed boundaries, not municipal boundaries. Events are rotated between locations in the watershed.
Gaining and keeping interest of agricultural producers.	Using farmer-knowledge and sharing affordable, practical solutions between producers.
Gaining and holding interest of all citizens in the watershed.	Keeping topics diverse and appealing to a variety of audiences. Education sessions are unique and diverse (open houses, tours, information sessions, meetings, seminars).

Success Strategies

The Life and Times of the Vermilion River presentation provided a new twist on delivery of watershed messages. The presentation focused attention on the unique qualities of the Vermilion River, its remarkable history and present day characteristics to increase awareness and motivate sustainable action.

Local media attend 75% of all VRWI events, ensuring the public is aware of all activities and providing another method of transferring information to people in the watershed.

Outcomes

- Largest VRWI meeting in the watershed to date - with 65 people in attendance.
- One of four watersheds in Alberta with a Cows and Fish "Life and Times" presentation.
- Provided a foundation of knowledge to encourage communication and spark interest in watershed health and sustainability.
- Highlighted history, natural features and stories unique to the Vermilion River watershed.

Investing in Stewardship

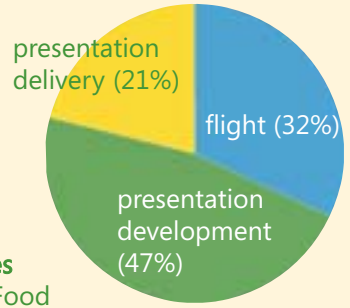
Total costs
$18,600

Cash
$5,000

Partners that provided cash
Ducks Unlimited Canada

Total in-kind costs
$13,600

Partners that provided in-kind services
Cows and Fish; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA); Vermilion River Naturalist Society; County of Minburn; County of Vermilion River; Alberta Environment; Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA); CKSA TV



Contact Us

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Reeling in the Community

Wizard Lake Watershed & Lake Stewardship Association

Our Story

In late 2004, the seeds were planted for the formation of a stewardship group at Wizard Lake - a unique serpentine-shaped lake 50 km southwest of Edmonton, in the North Saskatchewan River Watershed. Interest in the health of Wizard Lake dated back before the first lake management plan of 1980, and was rekindled during discussions for a draft 1998 lake management plan (subsequently not adopted). A small group of motivated residents wanted to create a forum for community members to take ownership and responsibility for the healthy future of Wizard Lake. They recognized a growing concern with the lake's water quality, characterized by algal blooms in late summer. The increasing number of power boats on this small and narrow lake generated safety concerns, as it is also used for swimming and fishing.

The Association started meeting regularly in spring 2005 and things quickly took off for this dedicated group. By March 2006 they were a registered society, and in September 2006 they became qualified to accept donations as a registered charity.

Our Project

The Wizard Lake Watershed and Lake Stewardship Association's (WLWLSA) first projects centered on formation and on making contact with watershed residents. As a start, they hand-delivered flyers to all the residents of the watershed to let them know about the group, to recruit interested residents, and to solicit input on the concerns of watershed residents. The group has used other creative ways to draw attention to their existence, such as a "Wiz 'Spiel" curling bonspiel on the frozen lake to raise awareness and funds.

By spring 2006 the level of interest and support for their group allowed them to take on other initiatives. In June 2006 they hosted a public meeting that featured guest speakers, information displays, and a facilitator moderated session that allowed residents to share their concerns and shape the direction of the WLWLSA. From this, a work plan was born and volunteer work groups took shape. Other initiatives in 2006 included a water quality monitoring program through the Alberta Lake Management Society (ALMS), water level monitoring with help from Alberta Environment, installation of speed limit signs and buoys, production of a website and newsletter, and hosting a barbeque as part of their first Annual General Meeting.

> *"It is only as a community that we will be able to make a difference… it's important to foster a Wizard Lake community, to foster pride in what we have, and to foster the will to work as a community to ensure the healthy future of our lake and watershed."*
>
> *~ Laverne Faulkner, Chairperson*

WLWLSA member takes Alberta Lake Management Society employee out on the lake to collect water samples for testing.

Achievements

In the early stages of the group's development the WLWLSA used the Alberta Stewardship Network's "Watershed Stewardship in Alberta: A Directory of Stewardship Groups, Support Agencies and Resources" to establish contacts with supporting organizations and agencies (e.g. Land Stewardship Centre of Canada), local politicians, and the jurisdictions involved in the Wizard Lake Watershed. These connections allowed them to participate in a water quality monitoring program through the ALMS LakeWatch program, participate in weekly lake level monitoring through Alberta Environment, and have a facilitator from Alberta Municipal Affairs (formerly under Alberta Community Development) lead them through a workshop to identify management priorities in the watershed.

The municipality has installed speed limit buoys and signage and the RCMP has increased enforcement of speed limits on the lake. By fall 2006 they had successfully enrolled 50 families as members of their organization, and had two public meetings with great turn-outs.

Communications successes include informational flyers to residents of the watershed, newsletters and a free website through the Alberta Stewardship Network.

WLWLSA board of directors meeting

WLWLSA member LeVerne Ellsworth reading the lake elevation gauge for Alberta Environment

Challenges	Solutions
Communicating information effectively to all residents of the watershed.	The group is planning an education program for all residents. It will involve establishing community bulletin boards to reach residents and to maintain their profile in the community.
Spanning multiple jurisdictions (e.g. two counties and different landuse guidelines).	The group is making a concerted effort to maintain contact with all jurisdictions.
Finding the right tools and partners (e.g. where to find expertise on an ongoing basis).	The group is continuing to make new contacts with appropriate experts, organizations, and agencies.

Success Strategies

Having a good skill set represented in the group (e.g. organizational skills, passion, contacts, familiarity with stewardship concepts).

Establishing an organizational structure and drafting a preliminary mission and goals early on helped the group recruit new members.

Taking time to recognize volunteers, celebrate accomplishments and have fun.

The WLWLSA annual general meeting included a barbeque for neighbours to meet and foster community spirit.

Contact Us

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Outcomes

- 85 people attended the group's first public meeting / open house.
- 50 families joined the organization within the first six months.
- 42 water samples were collected as part of ALMS LakeWatch program.
- 23 measurements of lake levels were taken during Summer 2006 (weekly from May to Oct).
- Five speed marker buoys and seven speed limit signs were installed along the lakeshore.

Investing in Stewardship

Cash
ASN Watershed Stewardship Grant $4,650
ESSO donation $500
Total $5,150

In-kind
Volunteer time from board members $12,880
Time and travel from Land Stewardship Centre of Canada and Alberta Environment $800
Office supplies provided in-kind $2,000
Travel expenses $592
Total $16,272

Expenditures

AGM and BBQ	$625
Maintain buoys & signage	$430
Start-up public meeting	$840
Meetings, materials	$350
Signage	$700
Community bulletin boards	$1,705
Conferences	$500
Total Expenditures	**$5,150**

Inspiring a Generation of Future Stewards

Cayley School

Our Story

Cayley School is a small rural school located in the Oldman River watershed, near the headwaters of Mosquito Creek. Since the mid-1990s, the population of Cayley and of Cayley School has been in decline and the school bus service was slated to stop running. School staff knew a creative solution was required. Given the community's strong agricultural traditions and stewardship ethic, it was a natural fit for the school to choose the theme of environmental stewardship. Thus, the **Cayley School's Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) program** was born as a specialized initiative to attract and retain students.

The establishment of the YES program was truly a community-wide initiative, with parents, community members, local businesses, and educational consultants all helping to shape the development of the program, and continuing to help with financial and in-kind support. The vision articulated by the school is "to foster responsible citizens who are lifelong leaders in environmental stewardship."

When asked "Who's job is it to take care of our environment," Emily (a Grade 5 student) exclaimed "Mine!" and then, after further reflection, added "Well, the earth does a good job of taking care of itself, but it's our job too."

River Watch is a program where students float down the Bow River in Calgary and sample water above and below the water treatment plant near the Calf Robe bridge.

Grade 7 students move carefully through the flower beds so as not to disturb the plants that are already growing. They are relating that to the ecological footprint that they are leaving.

Classroom teacher Penny Hajdu, works with her cross graded "Family Group" to evaluate the work of recyclers.

Achievements

Since establishing the program in 2004, the school has focused on different themes each year. In the first year, the focus was on existing environmental initiatives within the school. They expanded the recycling program to include more materials and collected the town's recyclables and hazardous waste as a service to the community. Students also began collecting litter at recess, and parents reported that their children were teaching them to reduce, reuse, and recycle at home. Classes began tending the neglected garden beds around the school, and they collected Canadian Tire money from the community to purchase gardening supplies. Teachers have noticed that this activity has nurtured the students' sense of ownership in the school grounds.

Principal Bill Holmes is "out of sorts" as he works with students to classify the recycling.

In the second year the school's focus was on water. Projects involved learning about cultural uses of water around the world, conducting water testing, and doing a river trip down the Bow River. The culmination of the year was a "water symposium" organized by the Grade 8 class, whereby students researched topics and invited experts to speak at the school.

The theme of the third year is "Inherit the Wind," and projects will include a tour of a wind farm and researching wind energy for their school. The school also hopes to install a wind turbine to demonstrate the technology.

Challenges	Solutions
Securing funds.	Apply for grants. Plan to use alternative energy to reduce operational cost. Solicit volunteer support and in-kind contributions where possible.
Ensuring long-term sustainability of the program.	Minimize program costs and stretch existing funds.
Limited preparation time for teachers.	Ensure that the program doesn't cost teachers extra planning time by having all projects contribute to curriculum requirements.

Success Strategies

The parents have been instrumental to the success of the YES program by assisting with fundraising, driving students to attend field trips, and generally being supportive of the program.

Local businesses and community members have been very helpful with in-kind support and donations, and connecting the school to other resources through their networks.

The staff at Cayley School has worked to ensure that any YES activities help teachers to meet curriculum requirements, so that the program does not place any additional burden on teachers.

Contact Us

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http://webacc.fsd38.ab.ca/schools/Cayley

Outcomes

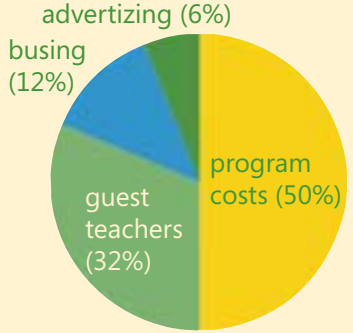
- Successfully averted the termination of the school's bus service.
- Awarded an honourable mention at the Mayor of Calgary's Award of Excellence luncheon in the category of Curriculum and Support for two years in a row.
- Have recruited a few new students who specifically came to the school to participate in the YES program, after finding out about it through the school's website.

Investing in Stewardship

Cash
$2,800
Provided by
Cayley School Council - Transportation
Alberta Initiative for School Improvement funding

In-kind
Guest speakers: ~$2,000*
Parents and volunteer community members:~$3,000*
Land Stewardship Centre of Canada contribution to hire a consultant for strategic planning of the program: $5,800
*Assuming $20/hour for volunteer time

Partners
Land Stewardship Centre of Canada
Town of High River
MD of Foothills
Alberta Environment
Friends of the Sheep
Ducks Unlimited
Goose Creek Renewable Energy



Making a **SPLASH!**

Rosebud River Watershed Partners

Our Story

The Rosebud River emerges out of rich agricultural grasslands near the town of Didsbury and flows 335 km to the canyons, ravines and hoodoos of the Drumheller badlands. Called "Akokiniskway" by the Blackfoot First Nation, which translates to "by the river of many roses," this river and its plentiful tributaries ultimately flow into the Red Deer River. Known for its palaeontological treasures of the Cretaceous period, the Rosebud River watershed is more than just dinosaur fossils - it's roughly 450,000 hectares, most of which is agricultural land.

In 2001, the Rosebud River Watershed Partners was formed by a group of concerned individuals interested in raising awareness about water conservation and watershed stewardship within the Rosebud River watershed.

The annual **SPLASH** *Fundraiser raises both funds and awareness for stewardship projects in the Rosebud River watershed.*

The Rosebud River Watershed Partners (RRWP) has grown in six years from ten charter members to a membership base of one hundred and twenty people. The number of activities has expanded with the size of the group to include an annual colouring and poster contest for children, watershed demonstration kits for use in schools, an annual canoe trip and various best management practice projects. Directed by their ambition to promote environmental sustainability of water through information, demonstrations and community participation, the RRWP have taken a unique approach to fundraising and community appreciation with their annual SPLASH event.

Our Project

In most years, by November, the harvest is complete and the Rosebud River Watershed Partners welcome their members and the community to attend the annual **SPLASH Fundraiser**. Over 100 local people attend the event to dine, dance, bid on silent auction items, and learn about stewardship activities in their community. Each person who attends receives a "grab bag" of donated items and take-home information to increase awareness of stewardship activities in the Rosebud River watershed. Ticket sales cover the costs of the dinner, musical entertainment and hall rental while the silent auction helps to raise funds for the RRWP to finance many of the group's stewardship activities. SPLASH also provides the RRWP a chance to recognize volunteers and profile the group's annual accomplishments.

Motivating people to change their attitudes and become actively involved in stewardship activities on their farm or in their community can be tricky. Securing annual funds to promote stewardship is an equally difficult task. SPLASH accomplishes both these needs by bringing together a sizeable group of people in an upbeat and relaxed environment to encourage constructive change and adoption of environmentally sustainable practices.

Achievements

Fundraising can be a time consuming and difficult task, involving much effort spent on applications, reports and budgets. Combining fundraising into an annual awareness and recognition event provides the opportunity for the RRWP to source "no-strings attached" funds from within the local community. Investors know exactly what they are supporting as a result of the presentations, displays and hand-out material provided. Nearly $1,500 is raised annually by the event to provide the RRWP with critical project and operating funds. The RRWP has also been successful in acquiring two grants of $3200 each from the Alberta Stewardship Network. These funds were used to complete numerous projects - including paying for the hall rental and invitations for the SPLASH event.

Challenges	Solutions
Motivating people to participate and implement practice changes.	Profiling success stories to the local community at the SPLASH event and thanking all volunteers and sponsors.
Securing annual project and operating funds for the RRWP.	Soliciting support from the community by involving urban and rural community members, including youth. Soliciting volunteer support and in-kind contributions where possible. Apply to granting agencies, such as the Alberta Stewardship Network, to assist with project delivery.

Success Strategies

In-kind support from many partners is key to the success of SPLASH. In addition, involving the media to spread the message of successful projects and to inspire new interest is critical. Ensuring that volunteers and partners are recognized and appreciated annually is crucial. Maintaining a diversity of projects within the watershed helps to keep people interested and participating.

Outcomes

- Between 100 and 125 people in attendance annually.
- Approximately $9,000 raised in the last six years for RRWP stewardship activities.
- Successful projects are highlighted to a large audience every year.
- Fifteen yard signs have been distributed in the community to acknowledge volunteers.
- Improved watershed awareness within the Rosebud River watershed community.

Investing in Stewardship

Item	Amount	Funding Source
Hall Rental	$200	Alberta Stewardship Network
Band	$1,200	Funded by ticket sales
Dinner	$1,500	Funded by ticket sales
Silent Auction	$4,000	All items donated by partners, watershed group members and local residents
Information Grab Bags	$50	All items donated by partners
Invitations	$100	Alberta Stewardship Network
TOTAL	**$7,050**	

Contact Us

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g_7@telusplanet.net

The Little Stream with Big Friends

Nose Creek Watershed Partnership

Our Story

As Nose Creek meanders through junk piles, industrial sites and residential areas, it may go unnoticed to many. Bounded by channelized banks, the creek disappears into numerous culverts and can dry up during extended droughts. A tributary of the Bow River, Nose Creek flows from its headwaters west of Crossfield, through Airdrie and finally through the City of Calgary. It's a small stream that is ignored no longer thanks to the efforts of the Nose Creek Watershed Partnership. The Nose Creek watershed faces a bewildering series of pressures from the cumulative effects of increasing residential and commercial development, industrial growth, stormwater discharge, agricultural activities and channelization. Urban and rural land uses have resulted in degraded water quality, loss and degradation of riparian areas, an overall reduction in channel length and an increase in flooding.

The Little Stream with Big Friends

The Nose Creek Watershed Partnership formed in 1998 when multiple jurisdictions recognized the need for improved management of riparian areas and water quality in the region. The goal of the Partnership is to improve water quality and protect riparian areas in the Nose Creek watershed, part of the greater Bow River watershed.

The Partnership commissioned several studies since 1998 to gain greater understanding of the watershed and to support recommendations made in the Water Management Plan. These studies included water quality monitoring, groundwater investigations, instream flow needs studies and riparian health assessments.

Partners worked together to ensure consensus-based decision making, long-term multi-jurisdictional commitment, and ongoing support through cash and in-kind contributions.

Erosion on West Nose Creek

Everyone needs a friend. . . that's what the Nose Creek Watershed Partnership is to Nose Creek. . . lots and lots of friends.

Our Project

The **Nose Creek Watershed Water Management Plan** is a ground-breaking document prepared by the Nose Creek Watershed Partnership to improve water quality and protect riparian areas in the Nose Creek watershed. The Water Management Plan was developed through the dedication and close collaboration of 11 agencies and organizations.

The planning process involved public consultation, new research, and the development of innovative solutions to address the main challenges in the watershed. It provides a consistent approach and valuable tools for watershed management across municipal boundaries.

Achievements

The Nose Creek Watershed Water Management Plan is one of the first Water Management Plans to be developed at a sub-basin scale in Alberta. The Water Management Plan has highlighted the need for an integrated approach to watershed management and has raised awareness among landowners, industry, government and non-government agencies.

The success of the Water Management Plan is demonstrated through:

1. A reduction in permissible release rates for stormwater discharge that will reduce streambank erosion.
2. Identification of runoff volume control targets that will encourage low impact development.
3. Flexible riparian setback criteria that allow for site-specific analysis of an individual parcel of land.

Bioengineering project, West Nose Creek

Challenges	Solutions
Limited local awarer	Hosted clean-up days, newsletters, public open houses and news campaigns.
Achieving consensus on recommendations.	Developed a staged Implementation Strategy to accompany the Water Management Plan and worked with each jurisdiction and industry stakeholders to understand individual needs.
Changing frameworks for water management planning and developing a common understanding of terminology across jurisdictions.	Much discussion is required to increase understanding of the main challenges in the watershed and development of new ideas to address them.
Communication.	Each jurisdiction provided representatives who worked together on the Nose Creek Watershed Partnership's Technical Team. Greater representation from each jurisdiction is required.

Success Strategies

An involved and informed partnership supported by a strong and determined Technical Team working on a clear goal.

Acquiring consistent funding sources throughout the completion of the project.

Youth education and watershed clean-up

Contact Us

Sandi Riemersma
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Box 94 Mossleigh AB T0L 1P0
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palliser.environmental@telus.net

Outcomes

- Improved integrated stormwater management practices with clear targets for implementation.
- Science-based riparian setback criteria for new developments.
- A consistent approach to water management among multiple jurisdictions.
- Increased awareness regarding watershed issues among residents, industry and government agencies.

Investing in Stewardship

Cash
$381,185 (over four years, 2003-2006)

In-kind
$42,000 (over four years, 2003-2006)

Partners: M.D. of Rocky View, City of Calgary, City of Airdrie, Town of Crossfield, Calgary Airport Authority and the Bow River Basin Council. Technical assistance provided by Alberta Environment, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Trout Unlimited Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation.

Natural Fixes for Streambank Erosion

Little Red Deer River Watershed Initiative

Our Story

The saying "none of us is as smart as all of us" holds true for the consortium of municipalities, agencies and organizations that make up the Little Red Deer River Watershed Initiative. Working together since 2001 to improve water quality in the Little Red Deer River watershed, this group is leading the way to sustainable management of riparian systems in a watershed that makes up most of the area west of Highway 2, between Crossfield and Innisfail. The Little Red Deer River flows northeast from its headwaters in the foothills to join the Red Deer River downstream of Glennifer Reservoir. Realizing funding for agricultural Beneficial Management Practice projects is attained more easily working on a watershed basis rather than by municipal boundaries, the Little Red Deer River Watershed Initiative banded together with a common goal of cost sharing in strategic watershed initiatives.

Over the years, the group has participated in approximately 32 landowner-led projects involving nutrient, riparian and pasture management. They have demonstrated that working on a watershed basis is an appropriate framework to achieve success.

The partnership includes: Mountain View County, MD of Rocky View, Red Deer County, MD of Bighorn, Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Agriculture and Food - Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture program, Friends of the Little Red Deer River Society, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Recognizing a streambank erosion problem, the Little Red Deer River Watershed Initiative investigated options to solve the issue. A "natural fix" was employed, using live plant material to fortify the banks. More than 60 volunteers played a vitally important role in this labour-intensive project.

Cut poplars, ready for planting

Building the wattle fence

Our Project

In 2005, severe spring flooding and streambank erosion in the Red Deer River watershed sparked concern among landowners. A cost-effective method for restoring streambanks and riparian areas was needed. The Little Red Deer Watershed Initiative (LRDWI) responded proactively by researching and then demonstrating **soil bioengineering** as an option to repair these sites.

Bioengineering involves the planting of live cuttings of trees and shrubs to protect unstable streambanks and shorelines. The restored streambanks reduce erosion by providing a physical barrier, protecting streambank materials, slowing down water and developing a dense matrix of roots to hold soils in place. Compared to traditional engineered approaches, such as concrete retaining walls or rip rap, bioengineering can be more sustainable and cost effective over the long term. Using native, locally found cuttings results in a restored site that blends into the landscape and provides fish and wildlife habitat. Restored sites also maintain water quality and are able to grow and evolve within the natural dynamics of the waterbody.

Achievements

Bioengineering is a relatively new solution for the management of eroding streambanks in Alberta. The group tested bioengineering techniques at multiple demonstration sites, using different techniques over different seasons. Five bioengineering methods were used: wattle fences; modified brush layers; live retaining walls; live staking and live planting.

Four bioengineering projects were completed in several central Alberta municipalities on the Little Red Deer River, Dogpound Creek, and Grease Creek. These demonstration sites were selected to be easily accessible and highly visible to the public.

To meet the needs of local landowners affected by the 2005 flooding, it was important to prove that bioengineering can be a cost effective, practical and successful solution. The two projects completed in April 2006 have already withstood high water events in June 2006. Cuttings began to sprout approximately one month after construction. At one site, ideal spring growing conditions combined with a little extra watering by the landowner promoted willow growth of approximately one centimetre per day. The remaining two projects completed in the fall of 2006 were watered to ensure sufficient soil moisture to prepare plants for the winter.

Before

After

Challenges / Solutions

Challenges	Solutions
Beaver can readily remove stems and damage bioengineered structures.	Wire was used to protect the woody material from beaver damage and stem removal.
A narrow window exists to complete bioengineering projects.	Ideally, this work should be done in the spring, before trees and shrubs begin to leaf out. Alternatively the work can be done in the fall, after willows are dormant but before the ground freezes.
Projects are extremely labour intensive.	The LRDRWI suggests partnering with a local stewardship group, youth group, or community association for volunteers.

Success Strategies

A proactive response by landowners and organizations to a growing erosion problem has been key to the success of this project. Also, the provision of hundreds of hours of labour by numerous volunteers has helped the LRDRWI achieve its goals.

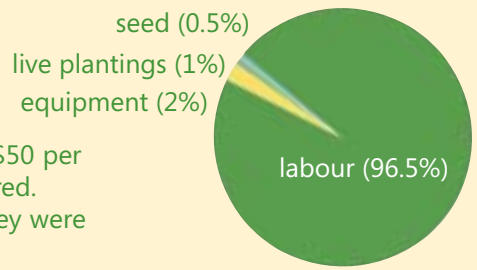
Outcomes

- 250 metres of restored streambank on four riparian sites.
- 400 metres of wattle fence and ten modified brush layers constructed. Other methods used include live staking, live planting and live retaining walls.
- 3,200 cuttings (mostly willow and poplar) used in construction at the four sites.
- More than 60 volunteers participated over ten days.

Investing in Stewardship

Cash
$4,000
Provided By
LRDRWI partners

In-kind
Labour costs estimated at $50 per metre of streambank restored.
Cuttings were free since they were harvested locally.
In kind labour for all four projects = $125,000



Provided By
LRDRWI partners

LRDRWI partners: Mountain View County, MD of Rocky View, Red Deer County, MD of Bighorn, Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture, Friends of the Little Red Deer River Society, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Contact Us

Sustainable Agricultural Specialist
Chair Little Red Deer River Watershed Initiative
c/o Mountain View County, Bag 100
Didsbury AB T0M 0W0
(403) 335-3311

Cottages and Farms - We Are All Connected

Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Association & Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society

Our Story

The Lac La Nonne watershed is a small drainage area 100 km northwest of Edmonton in the Boreal Mixedwood ecoregion. Situated within Lac Ste. Anne County and the County of Barrhead, the gently undulating landscape is known for its good agricultural land and its attractive lakes for recreation and year-round living. The Lac La Nonne watershed is 299 km^2 in size and includes Lac La Nonne Lake, Nakamun Lake, Majeau Lake, Tamarack Lake and Kakina Lake. These lakes are intermittently connected by numerous tributary streams. McDonald Creek flows out of Lac La Nonne to the Pembina River and eventually into the Athabasca River. Cottage owners and lake residents make up the majority of the population in the watershed and farmers own the majority of the land.

This watershed is lucky! It has two groups of dedicated volunteer stewards working to maintain and improve the watershed. The Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Association (LEPA) was established in 1983. In 2003, LEPA initiated the formation of the Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society (LWSS) as a venue for members of LEPA, the agriculture community, lake residents from all the lakes, and the municipalities to work together.

A sense of declining water quality and quantity stirred local residents, cottagers and farmers to look for ways of improving riparian health in the watershed. Three demonstration sites now illustrate how a few simple measures can lead to improvements in riparian health and in water quality and quantity.

Our Project

In response to increasing development and a sense of declining water quality and quantity in the watershed, LEPA launched the **Water Quality Assessment and Improvement Project** in 2004. The project established three agricultural beneficial management practice (BMP) demonstration sites. LEPA undertook two sites and a third was completed in partnership with LWSS. Farm families were approached with the idea of sharing their land to demonstrate different strategies for grazing livestock in riparian areas. When healthy, riparian areas trap sediment and nutrients and store and filter water, which improves both water quality and quantity. The demonstration sites illustrate how agricultural impacts can be mitigated through a combination of off-stream watering sites, fencing and controlled grazing strategies. Managing livestock access to riparian areas can reduce nutrient inputs to surface waters and provide critical rest to willows and native grasses during spring and fall.

Cows and Fish completed riparian health inventories on the demonstration sites. Two of the four new riparian pastures rated as "healthy but with problems," and two as "unhealthy." An ungrazed reference site was also inventoried and rated "healthy." The groups and farm families can now track the progress of riparian health and the success of the BMPs over time.

Windmill construction

This dugout was constructed to provide off-stream watering for cattle.

Achievements

Cottagers, lake residents and farmers worked side by side to create three demonstration sites in the Lac La Nonne watershed. In all, four new riparian pastures totaling ~40 hectares have been created to help control livestock access to sensitive shorelines. It took 3 km of fence plus the cooperation and hard work of a core group of volunteers to achieve this. New livestock water sources and distribution systems were needed at each site since livestock were now being kept out of the surface water. Two shallow wells and one dugout with an off-site well and motion-activated solar pump were developed. The shallow wells are pumped to an elevated storage tank and water is gravity-fed via buried pipeline to drinking troughs. One is powered by a solar system and the other by a windmill.

Newsletters, press releases and tours give everyone the opportunity to learn how these projects were developed, how they work and to observe that agricultural production and environmental protection objectives can (and do) co-exist. There may continue to be differences of opinion about what the issues are in the watershed and how to address them but these three projects demonstrate that there are ways to work together for a common goal - a healthy landscape that will benefit individuals, the environment and the community.

Challenges	Solutions
Volunteers with limited knowledge of administering a project of this magnitude.	Partnered with government and other agencies to assist with grant applications, budgets and reporting, tours and workshops.
Finding agricultural producers who were willing to cooperate with a group of cottagers and lake residents.	Found those that were willing and supported them. Landowners were front and center in design specifications and outcomes of the projects.
Lack of awareness or interest in stewardship among those not directly involved in these projects.	Providing newsletters, press releases, tours, workshops to get the word out on a continuing basis.

Success Strategies

Partnerships between LEPA, LWSS, provincial and federal government (i.e. Alberta Agriculture and Food and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - PFRA) and non-government agencies (i.e. Cows and Fish).

A core group of available volunteers with varied skill sets.

Contact Us

Lac La Nonne Enhancement & Protection Association
Site 1, Box 14, RR#1
Gunn AB T0E 1A0
www.lepa-ab.com
lepa@lepa-ab.com

Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society
Site 17, Box 22, RR#1
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laclanonne@shaw.ca
www.laclanonnewatershed.com

Outcomes

- Three new clean and accessible water supplies for livestock that can be showcased to others.
- Approximately 40 hectares of riparian lands transitioned from continuous summer grazing to time-controlled grazing.
- Sense of cooperation and ownership among those that worked on these projects.
- Increased awareness among the agriculture community that cottagers and lake residents are willing to help.

Investing in Stewardship

Cash
$40,982
Provided by
Alberta Stewardship Network; Watershed Stewardship Grant Program
Agriculture & Food Council; Community Riparian Program
Alberta Agriculture and Food; Canada-Alberta Farm Water Program
Canada-Alberta Farm Stewardship Program
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Association
Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society
Participating Agriculture Producers

In-kind
$37,955
Provided by
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - PFRA, Alberta Agriculture and Food, Cows and Fish, Lac La Nonne Enhancement and Protection Association, Lac La Nonne Watershed Stewardship Society, Participating Agriculture Producers

Driven By Nature, Powered By Producers

Beaver Creek Watershed Group

Our Story

Beaver Creek is a spring-fed stream situated in southwest Alberta. Originating in the Porcupine Hills, it flows for 35 km through four jurisdictions before emptying into the Oldman River. The Beaver Creek Watershed Group (BCWG) is comprised of farmers, ranchers, and other landowners that share past and present use of Beaver Creek. Formed in 2000, the group works to improve the integrity of Beaver Creek, especially the riparian areas and quality of the water. Their vision is to leave Beaver Creek and its surrounding watershed in the same or better condition than it is today, for the benefit of future generations.

In recent years, the watershed has experienced major floods, extended drought, and fire. These events have brought the group members closer together. Members have learned that, while such processes are natural, land use practices play an important role in the amount of damage sustained and how quickly things rebound.

Community-based water quality sampling demonstrates the commitment of the BCWG to making a difference in their watershed and improving water quality for downstream users.

Our Project

In 2001 there were allegations of poor water quality entering the Oldman River from Beaver Creek. This prompted local landowners to learn about the causes of declining water quality and how water quality can be improved. The Beaver Creek Watershed Group recognized the need to increase water quality monitoring, from one location at the downstream end of Beaver Creek, to half a dozen sites along the length of the Creek.

Beginning in 2003, the BCWG launched a **Water Quality Initiative**, and has since collected four years of water quality data for Beaver Creek. Water samples are collected every two weeks beginning in April and ending at freeze-up in late autumn by BCWG members. Once at the lab, samples are tested for bacteriological and chemical parameters. The data is analyzed by Alberta Agriculture and Food staff and presented to the group annually.

In addition to the volunteer landowners who drive the project, there are several government and agency partners including: the Community Riparian Program - Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund, Alberta Agriculture and Food, Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Stewardship Network, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. More recently, the Oldman Watershed Council and the Alberta Research and Extension Council of Alberta are contributing to the project.

Water quality monitoring station

Achievements

The BCWG now has an increased understanding of water flow and quality throughout the watershed. This knowledge has prompted many landowners to implement management changes that may help improve water quality over time.

Twelve off-stream watering projects have been developed, improving livestock distribution and encouraging cattle to spend less time in the riparian area. In addition, over 600 cows that once wintered within the sensitive riparian zone are now wintered in an upland location. Several landowners have completed ranch plans which take into account stocking rates, carrying capacity of their lands and management options for sustainability. Annual summer tours highlight local projects and the work of the BCWG to both landowners and the public.

The BCWG has won several prestigious awards:
2003 Partnering For Our Future Recognition Award (Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative)
2004 Countryside Canada Stewardship Recognition Award (Wildlife Habitat Canada)
2005 Emerald Award (Alberta Emerald Foundation - Community Group category)

Challenges / Solutions

Challenges	Solutions
Getting water samples collected and to the lab quickly and regularly.	Several dedicated volunteers from the watershed group have provided the bulk of this effort.
Raising enough money to monitor water quality over four years.	Assistance from various government and agency grants as outlined above.
Difficulty linking data with land use practices.	Dedicated assistance from government staff to analyze the data.

Success Strategies

Commitment of landowners to dedicate time and effort to the project over four years.

Developing partnerships with industry and all levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal).

Building trust in the community that the data being collected is designed to improve watershed health and not to be critical of the community.

Broad scale action on a watershed basis to improve riparian management practices, thereby improving water quality.

The Beaver Creek Watershed Group receives a Countryside Canada National Stewardship Award from Wildlife Habitat Canada.

Outcomes

- Four years of water quality data collected with a fifth year being planned.
- Water quality education and awareness for the entire watershed group.
- Water quality samples collected by four local watershed group members for the past four years.
- Better understanding of the sources of water quality problems.

Investing in Stewardship

Cash
$58,320 (for four years of water sampling including analysis and courier costs)
Provided by
Department of Fisheries and Oceans, The Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) Fund, Alberta Conservation Association, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - PFRA , Alberta Agriculture and Food, Alberta Stewardship Network

In-kind
$122,540 (over four years)
Provided by
Alberta Agriculture and Food, Cows and Fish, the landowners along Beaver Creek, Alberta Conservation Association

Contact Us

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Watershed Health ~ History in the Making

Iron Creek Watershed Improvement Society

Our Story

Situated in the Battle River watershed in the Central Parkland of Alberta, Iron Creek is one of 144 tributaries to the Battle River. The Iron Creek watershed covers an area of 3,500 km^2, and has a long and notable history. The creek itself is named for Canada's largest intact meteorite, a large lump of iron that fell to earth long ago. The watershed once felt the footfalls of Hudson Bay Company explorer Anthony Henday, and witnessed numerous heated battles between the Blackfoot and Cree First Nations. Today, a small dedicated stewardship group, the Iron Creek Watershed Improvement Society (ICWIS), is making history as its members awaken a stewardship ethic in this largely agriculture-based community.

The ICWIS is a non-profit society made up of farmers, ranchers and other community members from the watershed. The group first got together in the winter of 2000 and gained society status in the spring of 2001. The ICWIS formed in response to growing interest and concern regarding the health of the Iron Creek watershed.

The ICWIS strives to raise awareness about the importance, health and function of the Iron Creek watershed and to promote the agricultural, environmental and financial benefits derived from proper management techniques in riparian areas.

Our Project

In 2001, Cows and Fish, in partnership with Flagstaff County and the Iron Creek Watershed Improvement Society, conducted a **Riparian Health Inventory** on 30 sites along Iron Creek. When in good condition, riparian areas trap sediment, store water and provide forage and shelter for livestock and wildlife. The health of a riparian area can be assessed by looking at parameters such as the abundance of native plant communities, stability of streambanks and variety of ages of trees and shrubs.

In the summer of 2006, the ICWIS invited Cows and Fish to return to Iron Creek and perform a follow-up riparian health inventory on the sites that were assessed in 2001. Of the 23 participating landowners in 2001, 22 agreed to take part in the monitoring project in 2006, providing a picture of health and condition of the creek at a five-year interval. The ICWIS was the first stewardship group in central Alberta to monitor riparian health on a watershed basis.

> *"I realized that in order to make positive change, I had to start finding out what makes the farm excel."*
> *~ Don Ruzicka, chair ICWIS*

Achievements

In 2006 a total of 29 of the original 30 sites were monitored for riparian health. In 2001, 10% of sites rated "healthy," 55% rated "healthy with problems," and 35% rated "unhealthy." In 2006, 14% of sites rated "healthy," 48% rated "healthy with problems," and 38% rated "unhealthy." These numbers mirror Cows and Fish's riparian health inventory results from across Alberta between 1998 and 2005: 21% rated "healthy," 51% are "healthy with problems" and 28% are "unhealthy." A small increase in overall health was actually observed within the Iron Creek watershed, with the average health for all sites increasing from 66.2% in 2001 to 67.1% in 2006.

A survey of the 23 landowners in 2006 revealed that three landowners adopted a specific riparian management practice prior to the 2001 inventory and were still operating with that strategy. Another five landowners made a practice change since 2001 to better manage their riparian area (e.g. exclusion fencing, rest, cross fencing, water development). In addition, three landowners implemented general farm management changes, not related to their riparian management, but with an environmental focus (e.g. conventional tillage to minimum tillage, less chemical use) and two landowners tested out a new management practice (e.g. solar off-stream watering systems). Ten of the 23 landowners also indicated they plan to make new or additional practice changes in the next two to three years.

Challenges	Solutions
An aging farm & ranch community uninterested in stewardship.	Consistent, persistent awareness messages in a variety of formats with a stewardship focus. Partner with agencies and organizations to educate local youth on agriculture, the environment and stewardship.
There was a risk that the re-assessment would not show any positive change in riparian health, which would have been discouraging.	Despite this risk, the group decided to be a leader to keep monitoring riparian health over the long-term.

Success Strategies

A core group of members regularly attend meetings and events. They have been instrumental in the progress and success of the ICWIS to date.

The group believes that agriculture is more than just fitting into fluctuating markets, taking chances with bumper crops and waiting for rainfall. They know that it is about taking proactive measures to find out what's working and what's not and how simple actions can improve the viability of the family farm.

Outcomes

- First stewardship group in central Alberta to monitor riparian health on a watershed basis.
- Five of 23 landowners made a practice change to better manage their riparian area.
- Three of 23 landowners implemented non-riparian related practice changes.
- Two landowners tested a practice change to better manage their riparian area.

Investing in Stewardship

Cash
$39,820
Provided by
Greencover Canada (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)
Community Riparian Program (Agriculture and Food Council)
Flagstaff County

In-kind
$29,719
Provided by
ICWIS volunteers and community members
Flagstaff County
Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture
Cows and Fish

Contact Us

Iron Creek Watershed Improvement Society
c/o Flagstaff County, Box 358
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(780) 384-4100 Rural Conservation Technician

Rocks, Riffles and Pools

West Athabasca Watershed Bioregional Society

Our Story

Hardisty Creek, a small tributary of the Athabasca River, arises from the Big Horn Ridge and flows for just over 16 km to the town of Hinton, Alberta. It drains a watershed of approximately 37 km^2 and drops in elevation from 1650 metres at the headwaters to 950 metres at the confluence with the Athabasca River. In 2001, the West Athabasca Watershed Bioregional Society (WAWBS) initiated a community-based watershed restoration project called the **Hardisty Creek Restoration Project** (HRCP). Already an active group in the local community, WAWBS, a grassroots stewardship group, saw the need for community awareness and involvement in watershed protection - including the restoration of fish passage and fish habitat.

Our Project

Historically, Hardisty Creek supported numerous fish species including bull trout, a species listed as 'sensitive' in Alberta. Due to a number of barriers to fish passage, fish populations in the creek were limited to resident rainbow trout and brook trout. Fish habitat within Hinton was also heavily impacted.

The WAWBS conceptualized a plan to couple the restoration of fish passage and habitat with community education and involvement. In addition to the WAWBS, partners in the restoration project included Foothills Model Forest, the Town of Hinton, Fisheries & Oceans Canada, West Fraser Mills Inc., Canadian National Railway, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Transportation, Cows & Fish, Hinton Fish & Game Association, local schools and community members.

The HCRP was launched in September 2003 to mark UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) International Year for Fresh Water, and was officially endorsed by their Wonder of Water Initiative.

Checking out rainbow trout at a public event.

The Hardisty Creek Restoration Project has made big strides in improving fish habitat and fish movement in the watershed. In addition, public awareness of watershed issues has increased in the community.

Interpretive signage at the Canadian National Railways culvert.

Canadian National Railways culvert after restoration.

Achievements

October 2003 marked the first time that fish were able to move upstream through Hardisty Creek since the CNR culvert was constructed in 1928. The elimination of this barrier to fish passage provided a boost to the project and was showcased at the HCRP official launch in September 2003.

During 2004-2005, the project successfully completed more fish passage remediation and fish habitat restoration in Kinsmen Park, the HCRP demonstration site. In addition, West Fraser Mills Inc. replaced their mill-site culvert with a bridge. This opened up the entire lower section of Hardisty Creek, from the Athabasca River upstream to the Highway 16 crossing. Subsequent electro-fishing at the Kinsmen Park demonstration site produced not only rainbow and bull trout, but mountain whitefish - a good indicator of the project's effectiveness.

The HCRP achieved significant recognition in 2006, with the project listed as a finalist for an Alberta Emerald Award, and receiving a Hinton Chamber of Commerce Award within the Communities in Bloom category for Environmental Effort. More recently, the project has been granted a Forest Stewardship Recognition Program award through Wildlife Habitat Canada for outstanding stewardship in Canada's forests.

Community successes include a High School Watershed Awareness and Education program that targets 75 Grade 8 students, and 25 Grade 5 students. Water quality testing, aquatic invertebrate pollution tolerance indexing, creek reach mapping and riparian revegetation (planting willow cuttings) were all facilitated as part of curriculum requirements.

In 2006, the Foothills Model Forest hosted a Bioengineering Workshop, focusing on riparian restoration and streambank stability. The Junior Forest Ranger program participated by helping to maintain riffle structures, and planting trees and shrubs along the riparian zone in Kinsmen Park.

Challenges	Solutions
Volunteer fatigue.	Recognition, thanks and well-planned outings and events. Providing positive feedback to all volunteers.
Time lapses in planning and fund raising.	Re-grouping and carrying on into the next project phase. Recognition through awards and media attention has helped considerably.

Success Strategies

A powerful partnership between watershed stakeholders, the community of Hinton, all levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal), and the local watershed group. This partnership is actively engaged through the HCRP Steering Committee, and is essential in realizing the goals of the project.

Effective fundraising and ongoing community participation.

Access to scientific and technological expertise.

2003 public event at the CN culvert.

Outcomes

- Removal of three major barriers to fish passage and restoration of approximately 300 metres of fish habitat.
- Recent electrofishing efforts in restored sections of Hardisty Creek have resulted in capture of bull trout, northern pike and mountain whitefish, in addition to rainbow trout. This indicates that a number of fish species have returned to the creek!
- The HCRP Gumboot Volunteer core has 56 members to date.

Investing in Stewardship

The Town of Hinton provided in-kind support for the remediation of the Hardisty Avenue crossing in 2005 and earmarked an additional $30,000 for the remediation of two culvert crossings.

Alberta Ecotrust provided $27,500 for riparian bioengineering and fish habitat restoration and for the position of the HCRP Education and Outreach Coordinator.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada Stewardship-in-Action provided funds to create a HCRP brochure and for volunteer/public and school appreciation items.

Other funds for the project have been secured through a Shell Canada grant ($2,500) and a Greenstreets grant ($7,000) for support of a Bioengineering Workshop and for interpretative signage at the HCRP Kinsmen Park Demonstration Site.

Contact Us

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Making the Creek a Little Less Blue

Pincher Creek Watershed Group

Our Story

In the far southwestern corner of Alberta, winter snow pack and numerous springs trickle down the steep bedrock mountainsides of Victoria Peak. They merge on the canyon floor and form the beginnings of Pincher Creek, which flows out from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. This is a place where the transition between mountains and prairies is immediate, which creates a unique combination of climatic, topographical and ecological features. In turn, this supports numerous endemic and rare plant species.

Making the Creek a Little Less Blue

The Pincher Creek Watershed Group (PCWG) was formed in 2002 by concerned landowners living along the upper reaches of the creek. Troubled by the current condition of the creek, specifically about the abundance of blueweed, a noxious, non-native plant, landowners came together to organize a day to pick this invasive weed as a community event. Aware of the importance of water quantity and native plants to their way of life and the economy, these landowners wished to appropriately manage the creek and its riparian areas.

The mission statement adopted by the steering committee of the PCWG is simply to work together, as a community, to improve the health of the creek and surrounding watershed.

Our Project

The **Blueweed Blitz** is a community initiative to reduce the impact and spread of blueweed along the banks of Pincher Creek. The weed first appeared after a major flood in 1995, and has spread along the entire length of the creek. Prior to the Blueweed Blitz, neighbors were left to do what they could on their own. To move beyond accusations of people not doing their share, a few landowners organized a specific day to pick weeds together as a community. For the past four years, 70 to 125 volunteers from both urban and rural areas have happily spent a Saturday in July stuffing garbage bags full of this unwelcome weed. Individual landowners must also volunteer for the day if they want help picking weeds on their property. A pancake breakfast welcomes the volunteers. Beverages, t-shirts, a hot supper as well as local entertainment reward the volunteers at the end of a long day of battling blueweed.

The Blueweed Blitz isn't just about weeds. Working together as a community on an issue has also lead to significant improvements in communication amongst watershed residents. Through inclusive and informative events, such as the annual Blueweed Blitz, the Pincher Creek Watershed Group endeavors to have fun while making the creek and surrounding areas healthier.

Achievements

Getting volunteers to spend an entire day working for free, picking a prickly and rash-inducing plant on a Saturday in July is not easy. However, in only four years, the Blueweed Blitz has seen over 500 volunteers spend roughly 4,000 hours picking, pulling, bagging and hauling blueweed from the floodplain of Pincher Creek. Local families, ranchers, townspeople, and agency and organization people come together as a community to volunteer their time to tackle something that would be nearly impossible without this group effort.

It is estimated that fifteen tons of weeds have been removed from the banks of Pincher Creek in the past four years. Frustratingly, the blueweed keeps appearing, and thus far is unyielding to the efforts being made. However, if left on its own, it would invade a wider strip of land along the creek, spreading out wherever seeds can be transported or carried with the wind.

Challenges	Solutions
Gaining and maintaining community involvement.	Sponsors that enable us to provide ice cold beverages, a pancake breakfast, and a beef dinner.
A very difficult weed species to control.	These weeds are called invasive for a reason. They do not fade away because of a few weeds picked. It will take a concerted effort of several years to make a significant impact.
Finding the most effective method to control blueweed.	It is unknown whether picking is the best option. Blueweed grows in rocky creek beds, making it difficult to remove. Because of the proximity to water, spraying is not an alternative. Experimenting to see what works best will help in the future.

Success Strategies

Sponsorship allowed the PCWG to provide water, beverages and a beef dinner for the volunteers. The PCWG was fortunate to have a dedicated volunteer to spearhead the event. This person was able to increase volunteer turnout, secure sponsors to provide breakfast and obtain after-dinner entertainment. Those three things turned the Blueweed Blitz from a small gathering of supporters into an "EVENT." The group was also fortunate to have the involvement of a family along the creek who offers up their yard to the event volunteers every year.

Outcomes

* Increased participation - from 70 people in the first year, to over 100 volunteers each of the last two years.
* Picked an estimated 30,000 pounds of weeds.
* Increased communication between neighboring landowners as well as awareness that people are trying to help out with the problem.

Investing in Stewardship

Total Costs
Approximately $21,000 annually including in-kind donations.

Provided by
Shell Canada is the major sponsor providing cash ($3,000 in 2005).

Approximately $18,000 is donated in-kind annually. It is estimated that 125 people spend eight hours each working on the blitz. In addition, we receive products and services from several local businesses including Big Rock Brewery, Agcom Petroleum (Petro Canada), Water Pure and Delightful, Dahl Spraying, and the M.D. of Pincher Creek.

Contact Us

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Branches and Banks Annual Tree Plant

Branches and Banks Environmental Foundation

Our Story

Each spring since 1996, community volunteers converge on the waterways within the town of Cochrane for the Branches and Banks annual tree plant and watershed clean-up event. Hosted by the Branches and Banks Environmental Foundation, the project originated as a one-time event to promote the formation of the Cochrane Sustainable Communities Initiative. This one-time event has evolved into an annual community enhancement activity. The Foundation seeks to promote environmental stewardship and community spirit in the Town of Cochrane through the planting of trees and environmental enhancement activities within the community. Big Hill Creek, Jumping Pound Creek and the Bow River all flow within the Town of Cochrane limits, providing ample riparian habitat to support the Branches and Banks event.

Our Project

Branches and Banks engages community members in a day of trash collection, weed removal and the planting of 2,500 to 3,000 native trees and shrubs. The goal of the event isn't just to get people's hands dirty. Branches and Banks is also about environmental education. Throughout the day, environmental specialists speak to small groups of volunteers about riparian health, aquatic life, the local environment and relationships to the regional watershed. Education raises awareness and provides volunteers with the opportunity to develop a greater sense of appreciation, pride and ownership in their local community, their watershed and the project outcomes. Tree planting, invasive species removal, and garbage clean-up all help restore native plant communities and improve habitat for wildlife.

The event includes many families, which helps teach young participants the benefits of volunteering and protecting the environment. It provides an opportunity for all citizens to contribute to the wellness of their community, now and into the future.

Recognizing that the volunteer planters are a valuable resource, Branches and Banks strives to make the event a fun experience. The morning kicks off with a breakfast snack and some small gifts for participants. Gifts have included bird houses, gardening tools and bedding plants, which are timely as the event occurs in early June. Once registered, volunteers are assigned to one of the planting zones where they are given duties by the "area leaders" who coordinate tasks for that zone. Two hours later - after all the trees are planted, empty containers collected, and garbage bags are stacked - the volunteers return for a wrap-up barbeque and socializing.

Branches and Banks brings hundreds of volunteers together to improve watershed health in the Bow River Watershed by planting native trees and shrubs and removing garbage from local creeks.

Achievements

Since 1996 nearly 30,000 trees and shrubs have been planted along Big Hill Creek, Jumping Pound Creek and the Bow River within Cochrane with the support of over 2800 volunteers. Approximately 150 to 300 volunteers attend the event each year, which for a town of just over 12,000 people is an exceptional volunteer turn-out. In 2003, Branches and Banks received the Community Group Award from the Alberta Emerald Foundation, in recognition of the outstanding efforts of all the volunteers and generous sponsors.

Challenges

Maintaining ongoing participation and commitment from the organizing committee and the volunteers year after year is tricky. Every year it is more difficult to keep the interest of the core volunteers who organize the event.

Solutions

Consideration is being given to restructuring Branches and Banks and aligning with an evolving regional watershed group to gain more volunteer assistance.

Success Strategies

A small group of dedicated volunteers has been involved with Branches and Banks over numerous years. They have provided experience and continuity to the dynamic organization and are key to the multi-year success of this event.

Contact Us

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Outcomes

- Over 29,000 trees and shrubs planted along Big Hill Creek, Jumping Pound Creek and the Bow River over ten years.
- Over 2,800 volunteers have participated in the event since 1996, including many children and families. On average, around 140 to 160 volunteers participate per year. In 2002, over 300 volunteers took part in the event.
- Several tonnes of trash and debris removed from Cochrane waterways.
- Increased public awareness of local and regional watershed issues.

Investing in Stewardship

In-kind	
Organizing committee	$4,800
Consulting from nursery	$450
Municipality support	$1,500
Volunteer planters	$6,000
Administrative, staging, logistics	$400
Total	**$13,150**
Revenue	
Alberta Stewardship Network Grant	$5,000
Shell Canada, Bow River Basin Council, Town of Cochrane, Annex Church	$5,000
FortisAlberta, TransCanada	$4,000
Total	**$14,000**
Expenses	
Trees and Shrubs	$11,000
Topsoil, mulch and site preparation,	$150
Volunteer appreciation (breakfast, BBQ, gifts)	$2,000
Advertising and Media Promotion	$250
Office Supplies, Administration, Insurance	$150
Educational Materials	$250
Total Expenses	**$13,800**

A Home for a Chickadee

City of St. Albert

Our Story

The City of St. Albert celebrates a rich history that dates back to 1861 when it was founded by Father Albert Lacombe. Located in central Alberta, it was once one of the largest agricultural settlements west of Winnipeg. Now it is a bustling city of more than 56,000 residents. The Sturgeon River runs through the heart of the city as it snakes its way to meet the North Saskatchewan River. The watershed is characterized by groves of aspen and clusters of willow typical of Alberta's Central Parkland Natural Region. The rich agricultural land and proximity to Edmonton make this area attractive to people who are looking to "get out of the big city."

The **River Edge Enhancement Project** (REEP) Team formed in the fall of 2005. The team is made up of people with different interests but with a common willingness to commit time and effort to improve the environment along the edge of the Sturgeon River in St. Albert. The vision of the REEP team is to identify and carry out positive changes in the vegetative make-up of the river edge and to engage the local community and general public in the process. By re-introducing native trees and shrubs into an otherwise grassed and mowed environment, one of the goals is to attract new bird life into the area, particularly the black-capped chickadee.

Along the Sturgeon River, volunteers are working to increase biodiversity of the river's edge by planting native trees and shrubs. Unique birdfeeder-signposts alert the public to the project and provide winter food for birds!

Our Project

REEP began in 2005 with an inventory of a portion of the Sturgeon River riparian area undertaken by a volunteer working on behalf of the local Big Lake Environment Support Society (BLESS). In the 2.4 km of the river inventoried, 66 sites were described and mapped, and specific recommendations for biodiversity and aesthetic improvements for each site were noted. In addition, ten larger "enhancement sites" (where major projects could be attempted) were priority ranked, mapped and described. This report was presented to St. Albert City Council with a request for their support to implement some of the recommendations. Unanimous support from Council, allowed the increased involvement of City staff and the formation of the "team."

Over the winter Berrymore Flats was selected as the pilot site for an enhancement project. Following that, numerous planning meetings were held, plant material was collected and grant applications were submitted. By June the team was ready to bring the community together for the planting event.

Achievements

The efforts at Berrymore Flats on the Sturgeon River culminated on Father's Day when approximately 130 adults and children helped plant over 400 trees and shrubs in four different areas. Some test plots to study the success rates of specific shrub species were also initiated at this time. An educational sign post, which doubles as a bird feeder in the winter, has been installed to raise awareness of the intent of the plantings.

This project demonstrated the success of City employees and public volunteers working together. The City of St. Albert was willing to support staff that could lend organizational leadership to the initiative and provide a place to meet. The cooperation of the Public Works Department to participate in the planning and implementing of REEP activities was paramount. Volunteers brought passion and a variety of experiences that were necessary for the team to be successful. The early success of the 2006 Berrymore Flats initiative has sparked a second project on the Sturgeon River in the City of St. Albert to be completed in 2007.

Willow cutting group and REEP members

Solutions

Challenges	Solutions
Securing funding.	Accessing free plants from areas that were going to be developed. Some equipment was donated.
Soliciting volunteers and local neighbourhood support.	Promotion through door-to-door brochure drop-offs, public open house and newspaper ads.

Success Strategies

The vision and leadership of a few individuals can have a profound impact on a community! A key ingredient to this project was the support and involvement of a highly motivated City employee and a passionate local resident.

Volunteers dedicated to improving the environment along the edge of the Sturgeon River.

Diversity of partnerships: botanists, consultants, City employees, non-profit environmental groups, general public, provincial government, non-government organizations, local businesses.

Newly planted bed

Outcomes

- 130 community volunteers participated in the Father's Day event and demonstrated their commitment to the health of their community.
- Over 400 new native trees and shrubs planted.
- Positive relationships between the City of St. Albert employees and public volunteers.
- Another project in the works for 2007.

Investing in Stewardship

Cash
$3,000
Provided by
Unilever-Evergreen Aquatic Stewardship Grant, Roy Financial Services Inc., Pro-Western Plastics, Big Lake Environmental Support Society

In-kind
$4,500
Provided by
City of St. Albert, Stantec Consulting, St. Albert Community Garden Association, Big Lake Environmental Support Society, Select Equipment Rentals, Volunteer Citizens, Alberta Environment, Cows and Fish, Tree Canada

Contact Us

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A Letter to All Environmental Stewards

Dear Stewards,

If there is a recipe for successfully managing, maintaining and restoring watersheds and landscapes it has to involve **people**. That is the critical ingredient, the secret herbs and spices, indeed the magic required in the task of gluing together our watersheds. It's not that old black magic; it's that **community magic** that will aid us.

What these stories represent, with all of the collective enthusiasm and commitment to the landscape within a number of communities, is a watershed of change. It's a tidal wave compared to the past. I would equate that effort with the same scale of effort our grandparents and great-grandparents put into settling and conquering this province 50 to 100 years ago. In many ways, what we have to conquer, given our history of development, is significantly greater than the task of transforming prairie and parkland into fields. It is no less than the transformation of ourselves into more knowing, caring, sharing and understanding people. It is regaining not only landscapes, some of which will slip irrevocably through our fingers with current practices, but also reclaiming our communities, which can disappear just as completely.

What I have seen gives me hope for the dual tasks of watershed and community restoration. I would characterize what you do in the following ways:

1. You are building a cumulative body of knowledge in the community through **awareness programs**. Awareness helps people to identify the pieces of their landscape, how those pieces function and what the values are of the pieces. Timely and relevant information leads to more informed decisions on how to take care of land and water. Learning together may be the first step in acquainting (or reacquainting) people with their neighbours.

2. You have begun the task of creating a vision for what the watershed will look like tomorrow by acknowledging that what it is today isn't good enough. This is intergenerational; what it was, what it is, and what it will be. It takes some imagination to see the potential. To accomplish focus you recognize this must be a **shared vision** in order for it be successful.

3. You're building the capacity for action by **motivating people** to think about what is in the realm of the possible, if they try. In some cases this is about a sense of urgency for change while there is still the opportunity for a successful outcome.

4. You are creating a sense of some of the **options**, **alternatives** and **choices for change**. Along with this, you are gathering key contacts and information that will help to provide answers to the questions you encounter.

5. You have started to undertake actions, activities and projects that contribute to **watershed health** and to the common watershed vision. Such actions are contagious, and aid in mustering additional support and enthusiasm within the community.

6. You have thought about how to **monitor and measure progress** toward the collective watershed vision. The watershed is bigger than any individual landowner. All progress and success will be owned by the entire community.

Stewards like you have embarked on arguably one of Alberta's most important goals: building healthy watersheds and communities. You are doing it with enthusiasm, loyalty and an enduring commitment to yourselves, your families and your communities. Continue to aim high, and thank you for what you do.

Credits

Thank-you to everyone that graciously provided photographs for use in this publication:

Cover: Elizabeth Saunders

Back Cover: Gabrielle Kosmider, Carole Ellsworth

Introduction: Elizabeth Saunders

Elbow River Watershed Partnership:
pages 5-6 Robert Lee; page 7 Friends of Kananaskis Country; page 8 Robert Lee

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pages 9 Lorne Fitch; page 10 Kim Nielson, Kathrin Falz; page 12 Gary Lewis

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page 13 Lorne Fitch; page 14 Provincial Archives of Alberta A10063 and B2643, Upland bird bag 1920s - photographer unknown; page 15 Lorne Fitch, Elizabeth Saunders; page 16 Lorne Fitch

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pages 49-52 Gabrielle Kosmider

Pincher Creek Watershed Group:
page 53 Lorne Fitch; pages 54-56 Michael Gerrand

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page 61 Lorne Fitch; page 62 Dan Stoker, Kerri O'Shaughnessy; page 63 Andy Hurly, Dan Stoker, Kerri O'Shaughnessy; page 64 Dan Stoker

Concluding Pages: Elizabeth Saunders

Project Locations Map: Elizabeth Saunders

Design and Layout: Elizabeth Saunders
Sandpiper Ecological Research and Illustration

Printed by: Graphcom Printers Ltd.
Lethbridge, Alberta

Printed in Canada
June 2007
5,000 copies