



Riparian Restoration Up-date

Maintaining/restoring a watershed is an integrated collection of individual efforts. These efforts can be less than effective, especially in the face of upstream activities. Riparian health of our watershed is affected by what we do as neighbors and what activities occur. Crowsnest Pass watershed flows east into Alberta (Oldman Drainage System), our watershed is a collection basin of water received as rain or snowmelt along with streams, channels, drainages, wetlands, ponds and lakes. Riparian areas produce a buffer, especially useful to have when drought or flooding occurs. They are part of a healthy, functioning landscape and form part of an extensive watershed. We tend to think of riparian areas as a necessity for ourselves, wildlife, livestock and habitat for fish, but the key element is “water”. Watersheds with healthy riparian areas will provide downstream water users with acceptable water quality. Improving water quality starts with reducing erosion and sediment transport. Healthy riparian vegetation traps sediment before a load of problems is delivered to downstream water users. Identifying riparian areas that have the highest priority for improvement and setting management objectives that address soil, water and vegetation needs is key. Our Program focusses on prevention, what potential problems could result if not maintaining the healthy reaches of a stream or portions of shoreline? Reducing pressure or stress that is causing health to decline and not to let conditions get worse is a challenge. We protect and promote native vegetation to enhance recovery, restoration and maintenance. Mitigate or restore structure and function; doing it while the problems are small, before they become larger. Monitoring our progress and reclamation efforts and working with our neighbor’s when possible to make sure our efforts are consistent. We have seen progressively better riparian health as we adopt better land use practices, phase out some land uses and restore function to riparian landscapes.

Our Municipality is tasked with a consistent approach to weed control and help keep invasive species from spreading eastward. We are at the front line of defence, with a responsibility to our neighboring municipal districts, counties and the Province of Alberta to prevent eastern movement of Prohibited Noxious weeds and Noxious Weeds as listed in the Alberta Weed Control Act/Regulations. Dense infestations of invasive weeds in British Columbia and the heavy flow of traffic, creates further struggle to physically and financially control their spread. Without our efforts, the economic hardship ultimately will result in an agricultural production yield loss to our Province creating further burden on all Albertan’s.

Highlights of our Integrated Invasive Species Management Program, 2017 statistical information, forty eight separate riparian work activities completed e.g. cultural control of invasive plant species resulted in, 283 bags of weeds pulled with a combined weight of 763 kg’s delivered to the landfill, 7.5 km bed & shore weed removal, 144 willow & alder sticks planted and twelve environmental community events.