

Riparian Health A **Wake** Up Call

Some of the changes to a landscape occur slowly, over periods of time beyond an individual's memory. Because of this, sometimes we fail to notice that change, even deterioration, has happened.



This 1890 photograph of Willow Creek is an image of health; woody vegetation is abundant and diverse.



Almost 100 years later, this same site on Willow Creek shows substantial change, although some remnant woody species still persist.



This 1920's photograph of Sylvan Lake is an image of health; the water was clear, clean and enjoyed by many.



In recent times many central Alberta lakes show signs of water quality problems.

These changes may affect us, our lives, livelihood, health and recreation. When we begin to recognize riparian condition it is a start towards changing the trend from one of decline to stability and perhaps improvement in health. If you drink water, farm or ranch, have a lakeside cottage, swim, fish or watch birds, riparian area health is important to you. Riparian areas make up a small portion of the landscape, but are much more important to us than their small size would indicate.