

Riparian Profile & Reference Sites



What Are Profile Sites?

Profile sites are places where landowners have found what works to create or maintain healthy riparian areas on their operations. Their techniques portray or profile agricultural practices that are successful in keeping their operations productive and their landscape healthy. By understanding their experience and knowledge of managing riparian areas, we can better illustrate to other producers and communities the costs and benefits of proper riparian management, without having to wait for demonstration site results. Within a watershed, profile sites can help neighbours share information that benefits the entire community.



Examples

Many producers demonstrate successful riparian management in their green zones.

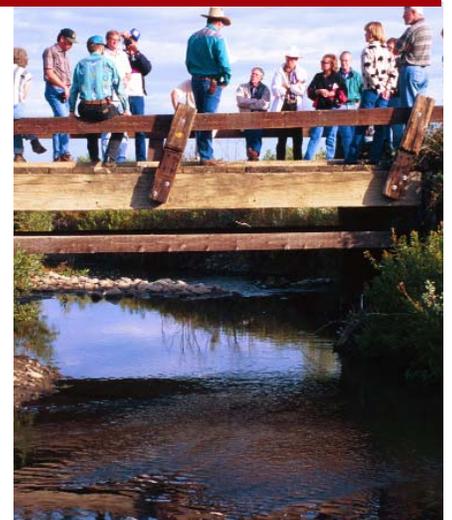
Jack Vandervalk monitors livestock use of woody species and avoids dormant-season use of his riparian pastures. The result is a healthy riparian area that traps sediment and stabilizes the streambanks.

Francis Gardner maintains healthy riparian holding pastures by employing supplemental feeding, controlled water access and by directing grazing pressure to the uplands.

The Value of Profile Sites

Profile sites are valuable "tools" for producers, community groups, and local communities because they:

- ◆ **Have been selected on the basis of their economic and ecological value** in providing practical examples of riparian grazing strategies that benefit landowners and their operations, while maintaining and protecting riparian health;
- ◆ **Display a positive, proactive message** to the community and general public that the agriculture sector is striving to keep our landscapes healthy; and
- ◆ **Demonstrate that landowners are motivated and willing to share their knowledge with others.**



More on Profile and Reference Sites.....



What Are Reference Sites?

Reference sites are places that show very little or no apparent disturbance from human activity, whether it be agriculture, industry, recreation, or other.

Generally, reference sites are **ecological benchmark** sites that provide insight into a stream or waterbody system's natural riparian plant community, biodiversity and health potential.

The photo to the left shows a reach of Pothole Creek in southern Alberta, protected from human disturbance by the Magrath Rod and Gun Club. Note the healthy shrub, sedge and cattail communities.



The Value of Reference Sites

Reference sites are valuable management tools for producers, community groups, and local communities because they:

- ◆ **Provide a reference for measuring and comparing** to other riparian sites;
- ◆ **Highlight specific elements of riparian health** that can be integrated into riparian grazing management, improving the effectiveness of the specific strategy. For example, if the site is producing good shrub communities associated with healthy riparian areas, then other sites on similar reaches of the stream should have the same plant community potential;
- ◆ **Set targets or goals for riparian management** within a specific area or watershed. In general they are the healthiest riparian sites in an area; and
- ◆ **Provide excellent opportunities for scientific research and education.**



Students learning about riparian plant communities and how they function.

Photo Credits: Lorne Fitch, Liz Saunders



Working with producers and communities on riparian awareness

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Cows and Fish Partners

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