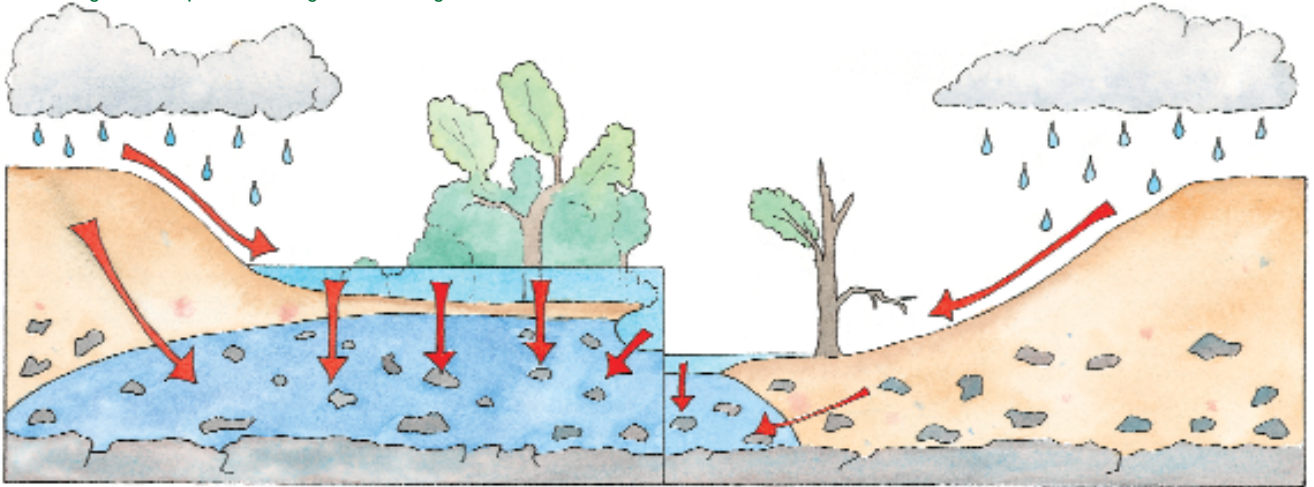


Water Investments

Deposits

Flooding is one way of putting water in the bank, figuratively and literally; water saturates the floodplain and raises the water table. Most floods in Alberta occur during spring and early summer.

In years without flooding over banks and shores, water enters the floodplain through the bottom and sides of the channel or basin, adding to groundwater. Stream channel meanders, wetlands and a well-vegetated riparian area slow water down, allowing it to seep into underground storage.

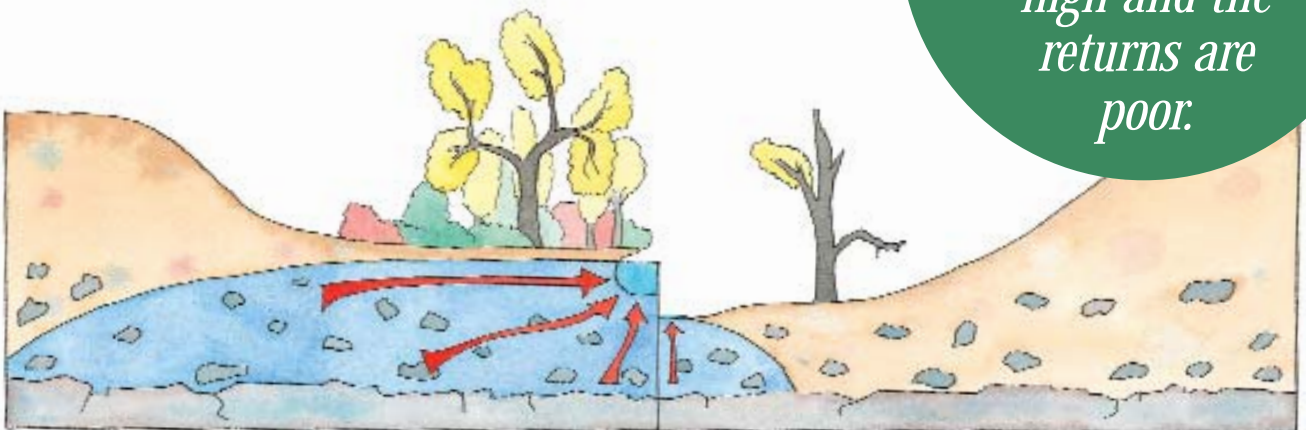


Healthy floodplains, which are well-vegetated, slow the flow of water, allow it to spread and soak in effectively.

Water speeds over floodplains with poor vegetation health, with channelized portions or cutoffs, and does not linger long enough to fill the underground “sponge.”

Withdrawals

For most streams, flow for the late-summer, fall and winter months depends on groundwater storage, a withdrawal of the spring investment. The maintenance of water levels in wetlands and lakes also depends on that stored, spring water.



In healthy, well-managed watersheds, stored groundwater is released back into the stream and riparian area.

Watersheds with poor groundwater storage capability may suffer low stream flows as the limited storage is exhausted. Streams may become intermittent in flow during crucial times and water may become unavailable for livestock, wildlife and fish.

Water investments: if you don't plan wisely, the risks are high and the returns are poor.