



2017 - 2018

Annual Highlights

Cows and Fish program delivery relies on many partners, agricultural producers, land managers, landowners, funders and local watershed stewardship groups - the work accomplished this year could not happen without them and our keen staff.



Spoke to 6,571 people

These included agricultural producers, lakeshore residents, youth, conservation groups, natural resource managers, and the general public, including:

- 558 agricultural producers
- 1,370 youth in over 30 Cows, Fish, Cattledogs and Kids! games



Delivered over 229 extension activities

Awareness about riparian areas, their health, management, and community-led action. Of these:

- We held 47 field-based activities (44 hands-on field days and 5 tours) with about 909 people, including 91 agricultural producers.
- Collaborated with numerous partners and volunteers in 9 riparian and upland restoration activities, including live-willow planting and bioengineering events.



We Made an Impact

Our 2017 program evaluation shows that we have helped to speed up the action! 49% of producers and 33% of lakefront owners say that they implemented changes sooner as a result of Cows and Fish.

49%

33%

Producer
Lakefront

2017

Exceeding Expectations

30% said the **Living with Beavers Workshop** was 'Over and Above' their expectations and a further 65% said it was 'Good'.

When asked if the **Fish, Fur & Feathers Webinar** met their expectations, 96% said it had (20% said it was 'over and above' what they expected).

"I enjoyed it - short sweet and simple terms - but logical and not unfairly bashing the cow - just letting the learning community know that cattle use in riparian areas can be managed effectively and share the community - thanks."

Fish, Fur & Feathers Webinar participant



"I was looking for alternate ways to manage water levels to prevent flooding without removing the beaver... I wanted to know more about to deal with the beavers and that expectation was met."

Living with Beavers Workshop attendee

New Tools and New Audiences



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RIPARIAN HEALTH

IN ALBERTA

RIPARIAN AREAS

Approximately 2 % to 5% of the settled portion of Alberta is riparian areas.



Riparian areas filter water improving water quality, trap sediment to build and restore banks, provide habitat for wildlife and fish, and store water for later release into the watershed.



RIPARIAN HEALTH

Measures the ecosystem function of riparian areas, including streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands.



KM'S OF STREAM + SHORE

Between 1996 and 2016 Cows and Fish staff have assessed on-the-ground 2190 kilometers of stream, river and shore to measure riparian health.

2678 RIPARIAN HEALTH SITES ASSESSED IN ALBERTA

Average riparian health rating: **70%**

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Protect native vegetation, keep development out of the floodplain and lakeshore, water livestock off-stream, learn to recognize and understand riparian health.

- To reach a greater audience, from any location, we recorded and delivered **seven webinars** that are now available for future use.
- Developed an **infographic** (shown on the left) as part of the Week of Water Twitter campaign, helping people understand the value of riparian areas and summarising the work we do.
- Established an **Erosion Control Technique Demonstration Site** north of Pincher Creek. The demo showcases novel erosion control techniques used in the southwest USA - a zuni bowl, a log step down, and numerous one rock and filter dams at multiple sites.



Zuni bowls



Log step down



8,081 – 18,600 Monthly Tweet Impressions



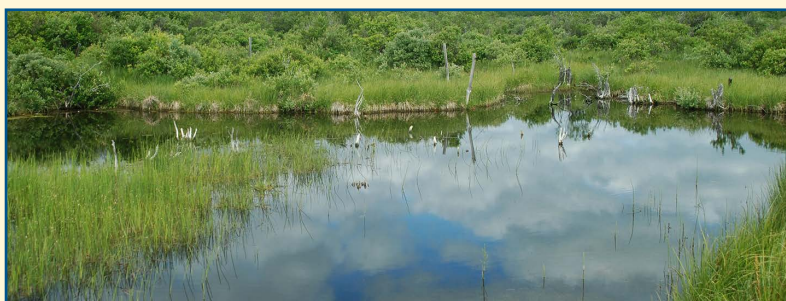
1,251 Facebook Followers

Riparian Health was Examined at 143 Sites

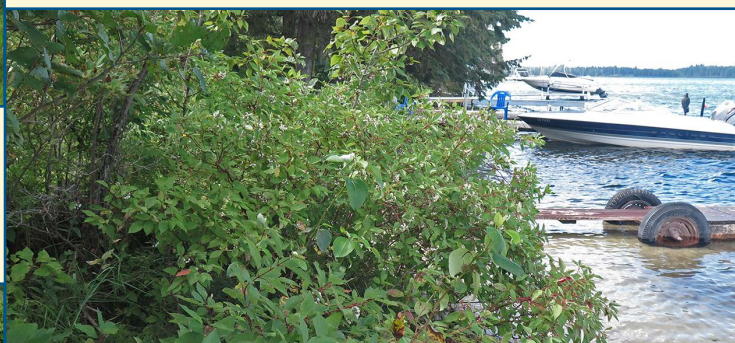


81 river & stream sites

71 km of banks & shores



81 different waterbodies were assessed



62 lake and wetland sites



We revisited 17 riparian health sites from prior years

We worked in 6 major river basins:

Athabasca
(4 sites)

Churchill (Beaver) River
(30 sites)

Peace River
(4 sites)

North Saskatchewan
(21 sites)

South Saskatchewan
(82 sites)

Missouri (Milk)
(2 sites)

Positive Results

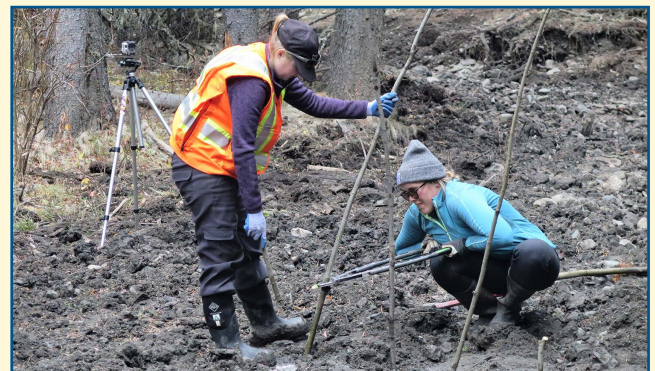
Although most sites change moderately, a few sites saw remarkable improvement, with one site improving by 30%. In 2017, of 4 sites that improved (increased 5% or more), average score improvement was 21% (ranging from 11-30%). The example below shows a site on Windsor Creek, in the Peace River Watershed, which has improved significantly over the past 8 years:



White spruce trees were planted in 2009. An electric fence was put in place on the north side of the creek a few years ago completing the riparian pasture unit, and an off-stream watering system was also developed. In fall 2017, a new livestock crossing was constructed near the upstream end of this site to facilitate livestock movement between pastures without going through the riparian area.

Restoration

We worked extensively with numerous partners and volunteers and co-led 3 riparian restoration activities, as well as participated at 3 others (total of 6 events). These included live-willow harvesting, planting and bioengineering, and signage installation, involving over 31 people.



Cows and Fish program delivery is enabled by many diverse funding resources, some that support specific work, but several are key to our larger, overall program delivery, so please see our website for more details. For more information on our 2017 - 2018 activities, see our full annual report, which is available on our website.

Working with producers and communities on riparian awareness

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Find us on 

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www.cowsandfish.org

Cows and Fish Partners

Landowners, Producers and Community Groups, Alberta Beef Producers, Trout Unlimited Canada, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Environment and Parks

Financial support for this work is described in the full annual report, available on our website.

