

Community Stories

Beaver Creek Watershed Group



About Us

Driven by Nature, Powered by Producers

The Beaver Creek Watershed Group (BCWG) has been working together since 2000 to improve the health of Beaver Creek. The BCWG is a group of farming, ranching, and recreational landowners that share past and present use of Beaver Creek. Through co-operative efforts, we wish to improve the integrity of Beaver Creek, especially the riparian areas and quality of the water.

Beaver Creek is a spring-fed stream situated in southwest Alberta. Originating in the Porcupine Hills, it flows for over 35 kilometers through four jurisdictions before emptying into the Oldman River.

In recent years, several major natural events such as floods, extended drought and the Granum wildfire, have brought this group closer together. We are learning that some damage is natural, which we have no control over, and the remainder is through land use practices, which we can control.

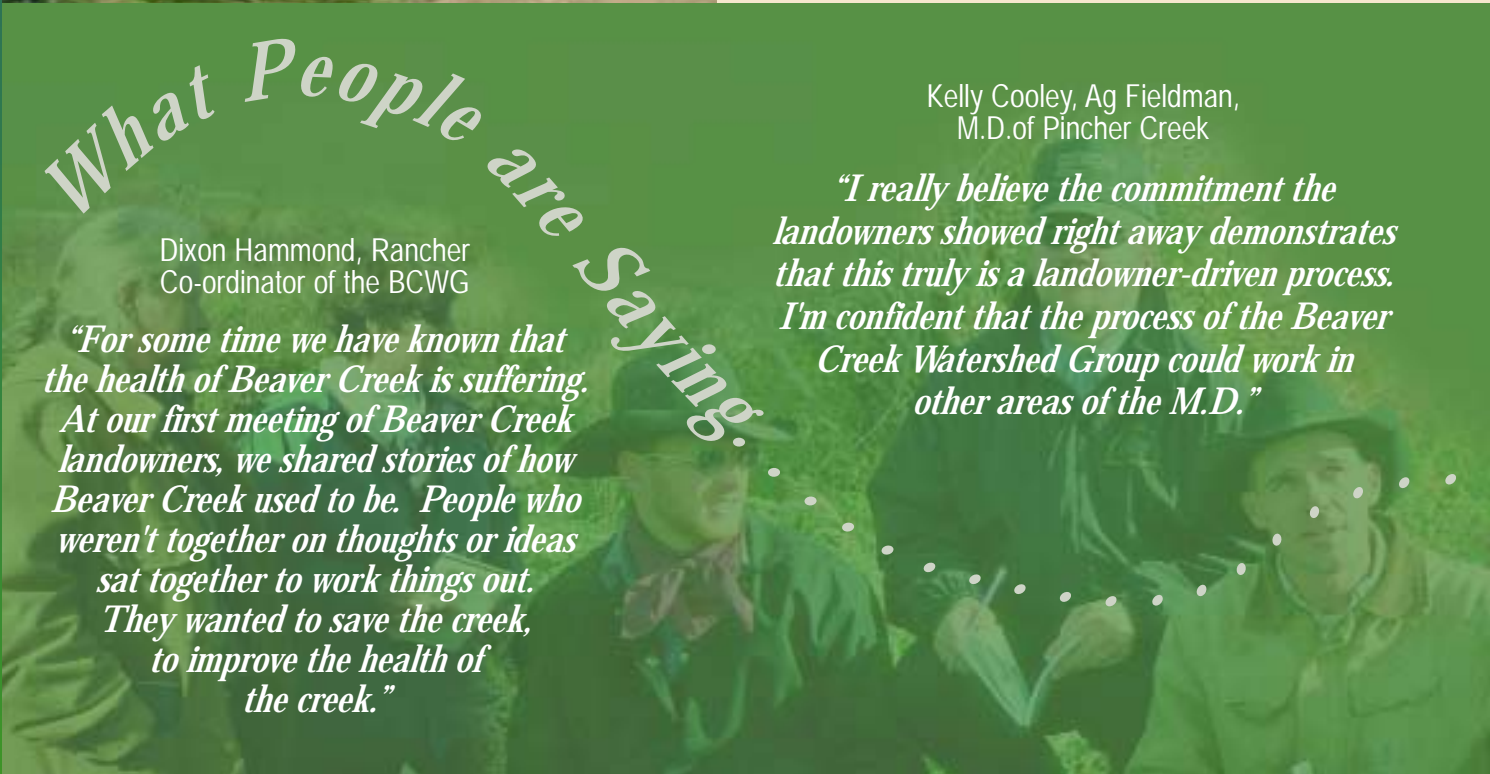
What People are Saying...

Dixon Hammond, Rancher
Co-ordinator of the BCWG

"For some time we have known that the health of Beaver Creek is suffering. At our first meeting of Beaver Creek landowners, we shared stories of how Beaver Creek used to be. People who weren't together on thoughts or ideas sat together to work things out. They wanted to save the creek, to improve the health of the creek."

Kelly Cooley, Ag Fieldman,
M.D. of Pincher Creek

"I really believe the commitment the landowners showed right away demonstrates that this truly is a landowner-driven process. I'm confident that the process of the Beaver Creek Watershed Group could work in other areas of the M.D."



What We Have Achieved . . .



We quickly realized that we needed to identify the challenges that we are faced with...

- ◆ Gathering historical benchmarks, such as memories and old photographs.
- ◆ Knowing the current state of riparian health of Beaver Creek. So far, Cows and Fish has completed over 30 riparian health inventories.

Once we knew the issues, it was time to act...

- ◆ Initiating a "working group" comprised of a variety of agency folks. This working group provides us with technical advice and resources.
- ◆ Working with landowners to design and implement changes to their agricultural practices that will improve riparian health.
- ◆ Finding dollars to match the considerable sweat equity donations of landowners.

The rubber is hitting the road...

- ◆ Seven off-stream water developments have been completed
- ◆ Over 600 cattle have been moved to alternative wintering areas, away from the creek.
- ◆ Ranch plans have been developed and built around healthy riparian and rangeland pastures.
- ◆ Deferred rest rotation systems have been developed.
- ◆ We have built education tools to share our good news stories with others.

"We are really the ones who manage the land every day and the positive actions we take today will ensure that our children have healthy riparian areas and clean water. Hopefully they will grow up understanding what it seemed to take us forever to learn."

Dixon Hammond



Production cages . . .

... checking out how much we have and how much we use.

Plans for the Future Include:

- ◆ Implementing practical agricultural practices that promote riparian health.
- ◆ Tackling weed infestations using conventional and innovative techniques.
- ◆ Starting a water quality monitoring program.
- ◆ Conducting public tours of our many demonstration sites.
- ◆ Sponsoring more riparian field days and awareness events.
- ◆ Enjoying the bountiful splendor that Beaver Creek has to offer!

Photo Credits: Michael Gerrand



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Cows and Fish Partners

Producers & Community Groups, Alberta Beef Producers, Trout Unlimited Canada, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Environment, Department of Fisheries & Oceans, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, Alberta Conservation Association

Funding Associates include

AESA, CARDF, CABIDF