

Community Stories

City of Camrose: A Forward and Upstream View

Our goal is to protect the Battle River watershed by bringing awareness to City of Camrose residents and landowners within the County of Camrose about water quantity, quality and watershed issues that affect them.

About Us

The City of Camrose sits in a largely agricultural part of central Alberta, within the County of Camrose. The City is surrounded by a typical aspen parkland landscape with numerous prairie pothole sloughs, small creeks and larger drainages. The Battle River flows just south of Camrose into Driedmeat Lake, the water supply for more than 15,000 residents of Camrose and Bittern Lake. Driedmeat Lake is a large prairie slough and is hypereutrophic, meaning that it contains a very high nutrient load. This results in a complex water treatment system with water quality issues such as high levels of organic materials, nitrogen, phosphorus, algae, and bacteria like Giardia and Cryptosporidia.

Our City recognizes the need to protect the Battle River watershed, and subsequently our water supply. This prompted us to form a unique partnership with the County of Camrose, beginning in 1998. Together we have been working on watershed issues ever since.

Working together builds cooperation and trust in the community and decreases the line between urban and rural people. The benefits of the partnership have been numerous. Two key benefits are the access to dollars for funding watershed initiatives and the exchange of information between rural and urban residents.

What People are Saying: . . .

Ted Gillespie,
City of Camrose Engineer

"The first rule in protecting your water system is to protect your watershed. We recognize that the City and the County are both part of the environment. We each have our own programs but where programs overlap, it makes sense to work together."

David Trautman,
County of Camrose
Assistant Agricultural
Fieldman

"I think all parties should take care of the river a little better. We should be stewards of it. I say to farmers, if they are living here and if they hope their children are going to take over, we'd love to have a system that is going to keep us here."



Ted Gillespie, City of Camrose and
Dave Trautman, County of Camrose

What We Have Achieved . . .



Funding from the City of Camrose and other sources such as the Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture and the Community Riparian Program, have helped our partnership accomplish the following:

- ◆ We conducted a water quality survey on Camrose Creek. The survey looked at general water quality parameters such as nitrogen, phosphorus and bacteria levels and also looked at herbicide residue coming from lawns, pastures and cropland.
- ◆ We held numerous workshops and meetings relating to watershed management.
- ◆ Riparian Health Assessments were completed by Cows and Fish on the Battle River and Driedmeat Lake.
- ◆ The County of Camrose acquired two portable off-site watering systems that are available to landowners to borrow.
- ◆ We held two summer riparian/off-site watering tours with over 100 landowners attending.
- ◆ We have established several riparian demonstration sites.

Plans for the Future Include:

The City of Camrose's future plans include:

- ◆ Management plan for the City's parks to include beaver management and balancing urban and natural areas in a sustainable manner.
- ◆ Wildlife Inventory on and around Mirror Lake.
- ◆ Update the City's wastewater bylaw.
- ◆ Educational programs, such as the "Yellow Fish Program", to raise awareness about water quality.

The County of Camrose's future plans include:

- ◆ Monitor riparian health on the Battle River with photography.
- ◆ On-site visits with landowners to discuss riparian management.
- ◆ Promotion of proper siting of livestock wintering areas.
- ◆ Demonstration of solar winter watering site.
- ◆ Water management workshop on a regional scale.

Photo Credits: Lorne Fitch, Kelsey Spicer-Rawe



For more information please contact:

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**Working with producers and
communities on riparian awareness**

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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, Fisheries & Oceans Canada, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, Alberta Conservation Association

Funding Associates include 
AESAs, CARDF, CABIDE, Habitat Stewardship Program