

**Alberta Conservation Association
2009/10 Project Summary Report**

Project Name: *Todd-Beaver Creek Riparian Conservation*

Fisheries Program Manager: Peter Aku

Project Leader: Mike Uchikura

Primary ACA staff on project:

Mike Uchikura

Partnerships

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows and Fish)
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Beaver Creek Watershed Group
Drywood/Yarrow Conservation Partnership
Indianfarm Creek Watershed Group
Lyndon Creek Watershed Group
Oldman Watershed Council
Penn West Energy
Pincher Creek Watershed Group
Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration
Royal Bank of Canada
South Eastern Alberta Watershed Alliance
South Western Alberta Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited Canada
Upper Todd Creek Watershed Group

Key Findings

- In partnership with the Lyndon Creek Watershed Group, conducted a public tour of the watershed to showcase riparian projects; we conducted an electrofishing demonstration during the tour.
- Established two landowner partnership fencing agreements, one on Drywood Creek and the other on Five Mile Creek (tributary to Beaver Creek).
- Participated in the Pincher Creek Watershed Group annual 'Blueweed Blitz' weed pull and education day.
- Established partnerships with four new watershed groups.

Introduction

In previous years, our riparian conservation projects in southern Alberta involved partnerships with watershed groups in two small sub-watersheds of the Oldman River, the Beaver and Todd creeks. More recently, new watershed groups have been formed within the Oldman River watershed creating opportunities for Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) to partner with these groups and engage more landowners in our riparian conservation projects. These watershed groups in the south have formed an excellent working relationship with both government and non-government agencies and collaborate with each other in organizing and conducting conservation projects, including riparian restorations. Our primary objectives in 2009/10 were to establish communication with watershed groups within the Oldman River watershed and collaborate with these watershed groups and landowners to implement riparian conservation projects.

Methods

We attended monthly planning meetings with the Lyndon Creek Watershed Group (LCWG) and Drywood/Yarrow Conservation Partnership (DYCP) from April and July to identify future riparian projects.

In partnership with the LCWG, we conducted a tour of Lyndon Creek watershed in August to showcase riparian initiatives already implemented by the watershed group – fencing projects, off-site watering, weed control and wind shelters used to distribute cattle pressure. The tour was open to other ranchers within the watershed, partner organizations (government and non-government), the general public and local media. We conducted an electrofishing demonstration on the creek as part of the LCWG tour. In August, we participated in an electrofishing demonstration day on Drywood Creek, hosted by the DYCP and Trout Unlimited Canada (TUC), who conducted the electrofishing. Further plans were made to host an educational day for Pincher Creek school students, involving Cows and Fish, TUC and ACA. However, this event was cancelled due to bad weather. Another attempt will be made in 2010.

We established one riparian fencing agreement on Drywood Creek by supplying 0.5 km fencing material to a landowner. We also established a second fencing partnership agreement with a landowner on Five Mile Creek (tributary to Beaver Creek); ACA provided approximately 1.5 km of fencing material towards a larger riparian fencing initiative. Cows and Fish conducted riparian health assessments and inventories at the Five Mile Creek project site.

The Pincher Creek Watershed Group hosts an invasive weed pull day (“Blueweed Blitz”), held annually in July. ACA’s participation and contribution of prizes in 2008 and 2009 was greatly appreciated.

Other riparian-based initiatives include being an active partner with the Oldman Watershed Council (OWC). Through involvement with the OWC, we entered into discussions about potential riparian projects with the recently formed Indianfarm Creek Watershed Group (ICWG). Plans for a bioengineering project are on-going.

Results

We maintained communication with existing partners, and established new ones, with the LCWG, DYCP, PCWG, and the OWC. All efforts spent in partner meetings have proven effective in creating an open line of communication. This has been a crucial first-step in building trust with working groups while promoting ACA and what we are capable of doing in regards to conservation.

In partnership with the LCWG, we conducted a public tour of the watershed to showcase riparian projects; ACA conducted an electrofishing demonstration during the tour. We also participated in an electrofishing demonstration day on Drywood Creek, hosted by the DYCP and Trout Unlimited. We established two landowner partnership fencing agreements, one on Drywood Creek and the other on Five Mile Creek, (tributary to Beaver Creek) and participated in the Pincher Creek Watershed Group annual 'Blueweed Blitz' weed pull and education day. The landowners on Drywood Creek and Five Mile Creek were extremely pleased with ACA's assistance in providing fencing material for the riparian fencing projects on their properties.

The tours, weed pull and educational events hosted by watershed groups have also been an extremely effective way of displaying to other groups, agencies, landowners, media and the public what kinds of initiatives the landowners are pursuing, and how seriously they take issues concerning riparian conservation.

Conclusions

This past year has been productive in establishing relationships with watershed and conservation groups in southern Alberta. These relationships have facilitated riparian fencing projects on Drywood Creek and Five Mile Creek, and will continue to facilitate future projects. Discussions are ongoing in regards to creating wider riparian buffer zones on Five Mile Creek and further riparian fencing projects on Drywood and Yarrow Creek.

Communications

- No direct communication activities were initiated by ACA. However, we supported individual watershed groups in advertising with local media about upcoming events and activities.

Literature Cited

n/a

Photo 1 -3 Captions

Lyndon Creek Watershed Group Tour. Crowd looking at a riparian pasture. (Photo: Mike Uchikura)

Pincher Creek Watershed Group. Annual “Blueweed Blitz” weed pull day. (Photo: Mike Uchikura)

Five Mile Creek. Cultivated area will be reseeded to increase riparian buffer. (Photo: Mike Uchikura)