

Alberta Conservation Association 2010/11 Project Summary Report

Project Name: *Red Deer – Battle River Riparian Conservation*

Fisheries Program Manager: Peter Aku

Project Leader: Diana Rung

Primary ACA staff on project:

Diana Rung

Partnerships

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada,
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development,
Alberta Environment,
Alberta Stewardship Network,
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Cows and Fish, Fisheries and Oceans Canada,
Grey Wooded Forage Association,
Lacombe County,
Penn West Energy,
Ponoka County, Red Deer County,
Royal Bank of Canada

Key Findings

- Riparian health at project sites either did not change or improved slightly over previous year conditions; one site was classified as unhealthy, three sites as healthy with problems, and one site as healthy.
- An estimated 100 people participated in community outreach activities.

Introduction

Human activities such as agriculture and residential development have impacted many of the riparian areas in the Red Deer and Battle River watersheds. Our project focuses on protecting and enhancing riparian habitats in these two watersheds. Since the project's inception in 1999, we have completed nine restoration projects in partnership with landowners, government, and other conservation organizations. Riparian enhancement methods include exclusion fencing of livestock, off-stream watering, and riparian pasture management. In recent years, we used aerial videography to assess riparian health at three lakes: Sylvan, Gull and Pigeon. In 2010/11, we inspected riparian enhancement projects, conducted public outreach activities with the Alberta Stewardship Network (ASN) and completed a report summarizing results over the 11-year duration of the project.

Methods

We remained active with the ASN and served as a member on their board of directors. We participated on the ASN Stewardship Grant committee, which directed funds from Alberta Environment's 'Water for Life Strategy' to watershed stewardship group projects. We also assisted in the planning and implementation of the eighth annual 'Stewards in Motion Workshop'.

We inspected existing project sites and completed riparian health assessments (Cows and Fish short form) at the following sites: Abraham, Bennett, Catellier, Simpson and Sproule. We also produced a report summarizing the activities completed between 1999 and 2010/11.

Results

We attended five ASN meetings, including the eighth annual 'Stewards in Motion Workshop' in June 2010, and the 2011 Stewardship Grant allocation in March. An estimated 100 people participated in our outreach activities, including 75 people at the 'Stewards in Motion Workshop' and 25 people at ASN meetings.

Riparian health at project sites either remained the same or improved over previous conditions (Table 1). Riparian health at the Abraham and Catellier projects remained unhealthy and healthy, respectively. Riparian health at three sites, the Bennett, Simpson, and Sproule projects, improved over the previous assessment, but all remained classified as healthy with problems.

Table 1. Summary of riparian health assessment ratings conducted in 2010/11 and a comparison with previous ratings.

Site	Previous riparian health assessment rating (%)	2010 riparian health assessment rating (%)	2010 riparian health description
Abraham	28	28	Unhealthy
Bennett	70	78	Healthy with problems
Catellier	88	88	Healthy
Simpson	66	74	Healthy with problems
Sproule	59	66	Healthy with problems

Conclusions

In 2010/11, we inspected riparian enhancements at five project sites, conducted public outreach activities with the ASN and completed a report summarizing results over the 11-year duration of the project. Riparian health at project sites either did not change or improved slightly over previous year conditions; one site was classified as unhealthy, three sites as healthy with problems and one site as healthy. An estimated 100 people participated in community outreach activities.

Communications

- N/A



Riparian pasture at the Sproule project site. (Photo: Diana Rung)



Streambank fencing at the Simpson project site. (Photo: Diana Rung)



Yellow lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum*) at the Sproule project site. (Photo: Diana Rung)



Fence line at the Bennett project site. (Photo: Diana Rung)