

## What is a Riparian Area?



You've seen them, crossed them, and walked in them; you may live on one. Riparian areas are the green zones around lakes and wetlands, the emerald threads of vegetation that border rivers and streams, and the lush fringe in valleys. Riparian areas run through our lives, just as the water that forms them runs through our bodies. If you drink water, farm or ranch, have a lakeside cottage, fish or watch birds, riparian areas are important to you. They make up a small portion of our landscape but are much more important to us than their small size would indicate.

## What do Riparian Areas do for you?

- Trap, store and slowly release water
- Buffer the impacts of floods and droughts
- Filter water, improving water quality
- Maintain high levels of biodiversity (fish, wildlife and plants) and agricultural production (livestock grazing)

# What is Cows and Fish?

Cows and Fish is a voluntary stewardship program. We work in partnership with landowners, farmers, ranchers, cottage owners, communities, agencies and groups on riparian awareness and management. We help to build knowledge, reduce conflicts, increase cooperative efforts and arrange technical advice and tools for management. We're not exclusively about cows, creeks and fish, but about wetlands, watersheds, people and communities too.



## What can Cows and Fish do for you?

Our focus is on increasing awareness and understanding about how riparian areas work.

- ◆ We can do this with your community through presentations, workshops, training and extension materials.

Your community can gain an appreciation of the health and function of riparian areas.

- ◆ We undertake riparian health inventories with your community to give you a starting point for future plans and management decisions.

We look for and share techniques for managing these vital green zones.

- ◆ For livestock grazing, management changes may include rotation systems, off-stream water development and timing of use.
- ◆ Changes in cultivation such as grassed waterways, buffer zones and crop choices can improve riparian areas.
- ◆ Landscaping and shoreline protection with native vegetation could be considered for lakeshore property and urban settings.

Cows and Fish can help create a pathway for management changes and link people in a watershed to work together.

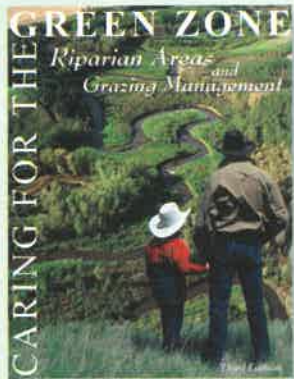
- ◆ Your community can work towards a common goal of improving the health of riparian areas for your benefit and for others that value these green zones.



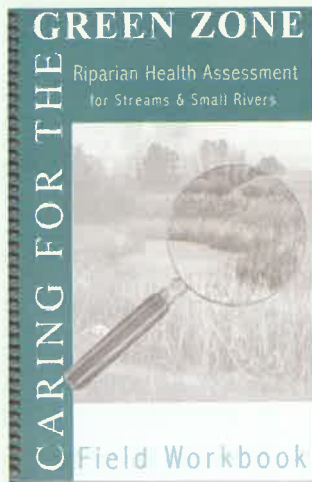


# Resources available from Cows and Fish

Check our website ([www.cowsandfish.org](http://www.cowsandfish.org)) or contact us for information on these and other resources.



*Caring for the Green Zone* booklet: How riparian systems work and how to keep them healthy.



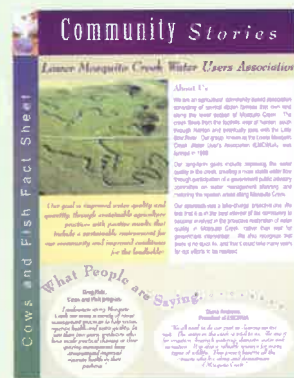
*Riparian Health Assessment for Streams and Small Rivers: A field workbook to help landowners determine the health of their riparian area.*



*Tools for Riparian Management: A complete list of available resource materials.*



*Talk to us about a presentation or workshop in your community.*



*Community and Producer stories: Examples of good stewardship.*

# How to Contact Cows and Fish

**Executive Director:** Lethbridge 403-381-5538  
**Riparian Specialists:**  
 Edmonton 780-427-7940 Airdrie 403-948-8519  
 Lethbridge 403-382-0927  
**Range/Riparian Specialist** Calgary 403-275-4400

**Fax** 403-381-5723  
**E-mail** [riparian@cowsandfish.org](mailto:riparian@cowsandfish.org)  
**Mail** 2nd Floor, YPM Place, 530 - 8th Street South  
 Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada T1J 2J8

[www.cowsandfish.org](http://www.cowsandfish.org)



*Healthy riparian areas sustain us. We invite you to work with Cows and Fish to conserve, restore and maintain these vital green zones.*

Cows and Fish is a partnership of groups and agencies that have come together to foster a better understanding of how improvements in management of riparian areas can enhance landscape health and productivity, for the benefit of landowners and others who use and value these green zones.

Photo Credits: Lorne Fitch

**Cows and Fish Members**  
 Producers, Landowners & Community Groups, Alberta Beef Producers, Trout Unlimited Canada, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Alberta Environment & Sustainable Resource Development, Fisheries & Oceans Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Conservation Association

Printed in Canada 20Feb13

# Cows and Fish



Caring for the Green Zone



Read on to find out about...

Riparian areas (the green zone)

A program called Cows and Fish: what is it?

How Cows and Fish can help YOU

How to contact Cows and Fish and how to find out more

