



# Ferry Point Reach

## Riparian Restoration Program

### 2013 Program Guidelines

#### 1. Overview

In 2011 the Battle River Watershed Alliance (BRWA) published their State of the Battle River Report. In this report riparian areas were assessed and on average only 39% of the river riparian areas were thought to be good and healthy. In contrast 43% were found to be poor or to have severe impairment of riparian functions with the remaining 18% rated as fair or moderately impaired. BRWA is concerned because of the 61% reduction in riparian functions of filtration, erosion preventions and providing biodiversity to support fish and fish habitat. From a farming, and ranching point of view this means less forage in riparian areas, poor riparian buffers to improve or maintain water quality, decreased water storage and less shelter for livestock and wildlife. **The purpose of the *Ferry Point Reach, Riparian Restoration Program (FRRP)* is to maintain healthy riparian areas and improve areas in poor health by way of** enhancing riparian buffers, water quality, and fish habitat and farming operations in that area of the Battle River. These steps are important to create a river that we and generations to come can enjoy, access, and thrive on.

**The intent of the Riparian Restoration Project is to work with interested landowners** who wish to implement actions or management changes on their land which meet the purpose of this project.

Interested landowners are invited to complete an application form that describes what they would like to do on their land. The application form includes an estimate of project costs along with a description of the project and its impact. Applications will be reviewed by the FRRP Advisory Committee and successful applicants will enter into a formal agreement with BRWA.

The program's focus area will be the 'Ferry Point Reach' which ranges from downstream of Driedmeat Lake, past the Ferry Point Crossing, within Camrose County. The Ferry Point Reach was selected for several reasons (1) This area is an important historical and social landmark (2) The area has significant agricultural economic value for local community members (3) The area was identified from past research to have poor water quality and a very low fish index (Index of Biological Integrity) and (4) Riparian Health Inventory (RHI) work from previous years.

BRWA will work in partnership with Cows and Fish (Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society) to host landowner meetings, complete Riparian or Range Health Assessment or Inventory and to provide technical advice on management changes and restoration work as part of this *Riparian Restoration Program*. Project funding for this program is provided by our partners Environment Canada and Penn West Exploration, in addition to Cows and Fish.

## 2. Projects Eligible for Funding Support

Any projects that meet the purpose of the FRRP may be eligible. Examples include (this list is not meant to be limiting):

- a) Fencing (including cross-fencing) to manage livestock access to or use of water bodies, banks, shorelines, riparian areas, or native range.
- b) Creating permanent cover (e.g. trees, shrubs, perennial forages, grass) buffer zones adjacent to water bodies or riparian areas.
- c) Developing off-site watering systems.
- d) Providing alternative shelter for livestock (alternatives to using riparian or native range trees / willows / shrubs).
- e) Converting non-native vegetation to native shrubs and trees adjacent to the river.
- f) Planting native trees and shrubs in riparian areas and native range where none exist.
- g) Controlling weeds in riparian areas, or in native range.
- h) Manure management around surface water or shallow groundwater (including soil and manure testing as part of a manure management plan).
- i) Building bridges/other approved crossings to manage how livestock or ATVs/snowmobiles cross water.
- j) Septic / Sewerage System improvements (where the septic / sewerage system is currently having negative impacts on surface water or shallow groundwater).
- k) Any other idea that a landowner has, that meets the purpose and intent of the program, may be eligible.

To be eligible, **the project must be effective for its intended purpose**. For example, if the project is a fence with a purpose to keep cattle out of a wetland for certain periods, then the fence needs to be designed and ultimately built and maintained such that cattle are kept out of the wetland during those periods. Length of project and maintenance period will be determined on a case-by-case period.

## 3. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Capital Items associated with an approved project, for which the landowner has a receipt of expense made, can be eligible for funding in the Riparian Restoration Project. Expenses will be approved on a case-by-case basis as part of the funding agreement. Eligible program funds may include:

- Project materials (e.g. fenceposts, wire, bridge decking, water pumps, grass seed, native tree/shrub seedlings, windbreak planking, etc.)
- Contracted labour for the project (e.g. engineers, fence-builders, surveyors, etc.)
- Contracted or rented equipment for the project (e.g. tractor, post-pounder, backhoe, etc.)

Items that are ineligible for FRRP funds include:

- Any cost not associated with the approved project
- Any cost for which a landowner does not have a receipt of expense made.
- Any cost that has been covered by any other funding program.

*Note: Retroactivity*

- Expenses made before a project is approved, **MAY be eligible if they were completed since March 2012.**
- HOWEVER: the landowner must understand that he/she runs the risk of **not receiving** project funding for expenses made before a project is approved.
- The intent of this “Retroactivity Clause” is to support new projects...for example, a project done a couple months ago, before the landowner realized there was a funding program, or to help cover costs of materials that may have been purchased some time ago (for example, fence posts), but happen to be going in the ground as part of a new project.
- Retroactive projects may not apply for funding if they had previously received funding for the project through other sources.

#### **4. Funding Levels**

The *Ferry Point Reach Riparian Restoration Program* is a shared investment program. Thanks to the program sponsors, the BRWA has a limited amount of funding to be shared amongst all interested parties. The landowners are expected to share in the project planning and implementation of their project. The BRWA may not be able to fund all the costs of a project in this program. The following funding levels will apply:

- a) The maximum funding provided to **any single project**, by the FRRP, will be \$5,000.
- b) A project involving fencing can be funded by the FRRP to a maximum of \$1,800 per half mile of fence for materials. This increases to \$2,500 per half mile of fence for materials, for livestock with “special fencing needs” such as sheep, elk or bison. Other expenses are also eligible, as per the program’s other funding rules below.
- c) Landowners are **able to apply for funding for more than one project** (ie. If the project idea would result in expenses of over \$5,000 the landowner is advised to break it into several individual parts). If a landowner has several \$5000 projects, all ideas will be considered however we cannot guarantee that multiple projects will be approved.

#### **5. Riparian Restoration Project Application Decision Making**

Applications for the FRRP 2013 Spring/Summer will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee in April of 2013. **The deadline for this term of funding is April 12<sup>th</sup> 2013.**

The FRRP advisory committee consists of staff from the BRWA staff, Cows and Fish, County of Camrose, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of National Defense, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and two local landowners.

All project applicants will be kept confidential to the FRRP Advisory team until the project has been approved.

## 6. Program Priorities

If required, preference for funding will be given to higher-priority projects, as determined by the FRRP advisory team and/or based on environmental considerations. Priorities include but are not limited to:

- a) Effect of proposed project on meeting the FRRP goals
- b) Protecting habitat / ecological function vs. restoring habitat / ecological function
- c) Current state of Riparian Area and potential for improvement
- d) Project size; number of acres it will help improve; number of livestock involved in project
- e) Project location with the Ferry Point reach priority area
- f) Willingness of landowner to share and demonstrate what's been done and lessons learned through the project (e.g. tours, articles)
- g) Ease of access to the project for education and awareness opportunities
- h) Value of habitat for fish and wildlife
- i) Previous work done to improve management practices and/or previous riparian health inventory
- j) Project costs
- k) Potential for further projects and improvements

## 7. Permits and Approvals

It is the responsibility of the landowner to ensure that they have all required permits and approvals, from any and all regulatory / permitting agencies. BRWA or our partners will not be responsible in any way for permits and approvals for any project under this program.

## 8. Participating Landowner Responsibilities

- Landowners will acquire and maintain all required permits, approvals, permissions, etc. for the project
- Landowners will be responsible for all up-front costs associated with a project. BRWA will reimburse for those project costs which are deemed eligible project expenses, once a funding agreement is in place. Landowners will be responsible for maintaining the project such that its intended purpose is accomplished for a length of time suitable for the project and agreed upon by all partners.
- Landowners will be responsible for all ongoing project maintenance (including costs).
- Landowners will provide reasonable, periodic access to project staff and our partners, for Riparian Health or Range Assessment or Inventory or other ecological assessments of the project area (this will include photographing the project site). Landowners will be given at least 48 hour notice.
- Landowners will consider requests by BRWA staff and/or project partners to include the project in presentations or printed material, tours / field days / demonstrations / etc., on a case-by-case basis.
- In consultation with the BRWA and our partners, landowners will develop and follow a stewardship plan for the project area, that all parties involved with the project agree with and support.
- Landowners will complete their project and send in receipts within 12 months of project approval.
- Not hold BRWA, project partners or funders liable for project failures do to unforeseen circumstances.