

From: Robin McLeod

Sent: Friday, May 23, 2008 3:57 PM

Subject: FW: "The Ripple" - Radiating Information - River Valleys Committee - #2



River Valleys Committee: "The Ripple"

Wed. May 28, 2008: The Makings of a Bridge, Parks Foundation, 225 13 Ave SW, 7:00 to 9:00pm

At a special meeting of Plan-It-Calgary in February '08, members of the RVC and Bow River Basin Council (BRBC) discussed future bridge and utility crossings of rivers and streams in Calgary. In proactive mode, RVC is hosting a brainstorming session to produce a set of criteria to describe essential elements of environmentally benign, "low impact" river crossings. Your presence is requested. **Please RSVP to Susan Ryan by May 26.**

Exactly how healthy are the riparian zones in Calgary?

For those who may not know, the riparian zones are the lush green vegetative areas found adjacent to water bodies including streams, creeks, rivers, wetlands, ponds and lakes.

Healthy riparian zones are highly productive areas that filter out water contaminants before entering water bodies, act as sponges and buffers slowing down water speed, bind the soil together reducing erosion and sedimentation, trap and hold soil particles in water, and provide biodiversity and homes to wildlife and plant species. In fact, 80% of Alberta's biodiversity is found within riparian areas which make up only 2% of Alberta's land mass.

City of Calgary Water Resources has commissioned Cows and Fish, formally known as the Alberta Riparian Management Society, to conduct a health audit of riparian zones within Calgary. In 2007 sites on the Lower Elbow, Nose Creek and West Nose Creek were evaluated with generally low scores indicating poor health of the riparian zones.

In 2008 the Bow River and industrial and commercial lands bordering water bodies within Calgary will be assessed followed by residential areas on a volunteer basis in 2009.

City of Calgary Parks is using the results of the riparian audit to launch a **Riparian Enhancement Strategy** and education awareness program for the City of Calgary.

Implications of a Calgary Riparian Enhancement Strategy

- elevation and recognition of the importance and conservation of riparian zones in Calgary
- establishment of baseline riparian health assessments within the City
- improved water quality and aquatic habitat
- potential inclusion of riparian health audits in new developments and area structure plans
- opportunities for stewardship groups to become involved in riparian rehabilitation projects

For excellent information on riparian areas visit: www.cowsandfish.org

Have a great weekend!

Yours truly,

Robin McLeod
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The River Valleys Committee works to conserve, protect and champion Calgary's rivers, creeks, wetlands and valleys.