

# The Blindman River Watershed Restoration Project

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## What is the Blindman River Watershed?

The Blindman River Watershed is in the northwest portion of the Red Deer River Watershed and encompasses 229,837ha, which includes the counties of Lacombe, Ponoka, Red Deer and Wetaskiwin. The Blindman River traverses the agricultural lands of Central Alberta and is an important water supply for livestock as well as wildlife.

## Why are restoration efforts needed?

The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance(RDWA) conducted a health and risk assessment of the river which rated the health of the Blindman River Watershed as “poor”. Unhealthy “riparian areas” (i.e. lands adjacent to the water), agricultural runoff and other land use impacts had contributed to nutrient and bacterial concentrations exceeding the water quality guidelines. Industrial and agricultural activities have drastically reduced the forest cover in riparian areas which



*We are proud to acknowledge support from the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program which made this project possible.*

have increased flooding and drought risks downstream. The removal of the majority of the vegetation in the riparian areas and adjacent uplands has led to drastic flow conditions overland and in-channel and flow in time of spring melts and times of extreme weather.



## Goals of the restoration project

The goal of the Blindman River Watershed Restoration Project is to re-establish vegetative cover, modify past agricultural practices and provided for better water management in the riparian areas along the Blindman River that will:

- Mitigate drought, flooding, and water quality concerns;
- Create and enhance wildlife habitat; and
- Allow for various land-use activities (e.g. grazing, recreation) to be continued in a sustainable manner.

Throughout the process of re-establishing vegetative cover, the group will be looking to promote stewardship and sustainable management of the Blindman River Watershed.

## Restoration project activities

- Riparian Area assessment for the entire Blindman River sub-basin (All members)
- Riparian Health Inventories to identify status of riparian zones (AWES, Cows and Fish)
- Planting site assessments (AWES)
- Grazing plans to provide alternative management options for landowners who use Blindman for water supply (Cows and Fish)
- Planting of over 31,000 trees and shrubs (All members and volunteers)



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