

## Shelterbelt Establishment-

*Jeff Renton of AWES  
Coming to Hazel Bluff and  
Morinville*

In 2013, the federal government ended the century old PFRA program. This program saw free seedlings supplied to area producers to increase the number of shelterbelts in agricultural areas. While everyone misses the program, many municipalities have created programs of their own to increase the availability of shelterbelt seedlings.

Jeff Renton, the manager of the Alberta Woodlot Extension Society is scheduled to make a stop in Morinville on Feb 25th and Hazel Bluff on Feb 26th. Jeff will be walking attendees through how to select a site for a shelterbelt, the continued importance of shelterbelts, how to maintain a healthy shelterbelt, how to select the appropriate species for the soil type as well as information on plastic mulch benefits and installation.

H2C encourages all those considering planting shelterbelts large and small to register for these workshops. While municipalities do provide seedlings at as low a cost as possible, shelterbelts are no longer free. They are an investment of money and more importantly, time. A well planned and maintained shelterbelt can provide benefits for generations. Start with this workshop and go from there. Contact H2C to register.



<http://www.albertawheat.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/AboutWheat.jpg>

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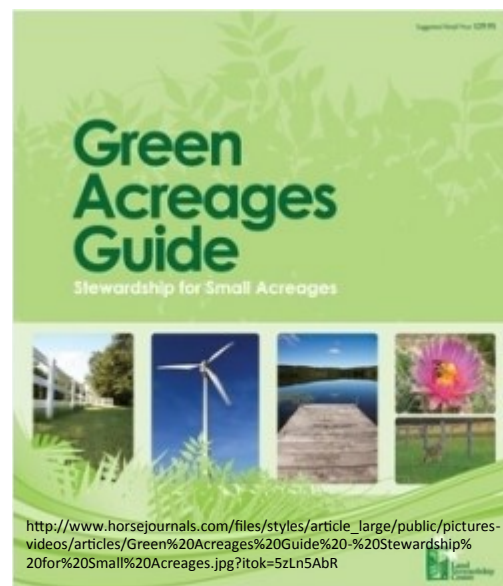
## "Green Acreages" Program Launches in H2C Area

In late 2012, the Land Stewardship Centre released "The Green Acreages Guide". This document is a comprehensive resource that provides acreage owners with the information they need to manage their acreages, hobby farms and recreational properties in a more sustainable manner. Members of the Highway Two Conservation Partnership have been experiencing a steady increase in the development of acreage properties and the need for information for these landowners has been recognized. To this end, the Highway Two Conservation Partnership developed the "Green Acreages Program".

As part of regular programming, certain workshops, demonstrations and tours that provide hands on learning experiences related to the Guide will be provided to H2C Partnership ratepayers. These events will be subtitled with "Green Acreages Event". It is the hope of the partnership that this will help ratepayers to implement the information in the guide with ease and confidence. H2C values continuing education and the Green Acreages Delivery Program was designed with this value in mind.

Ratepayers wishing to participate in the "Green Acreages Program" should contact their municipality to register. Once registered, a registration card will be issued. Participants will be added to a contact list so they can be informed about "Green Acreages Program" events. Once registrants have completed the required workshops and final course, a certificate and card of completion will be issued and they will receive the "Green Acreages Guide" (\$30 value), free of charge.

The completion card and certificate will allow participants to receive discounts from their municipal Agricultural Services department on specified services as well as H2C event registrations.



[http://www.horsejournals.com/files/styles/article\\_large/public/pictures-videos/articles/Green%20Acreages%20Guide%20-%20Stewardship%20for%20Small%20Acreages.jpg?itok=5zLn5AbR](http://www.horsejournals.com/files/styles/article_large/public/pictures-videos/articles/Green%20Acreages%20Guide%20-%20Stewardship%20for%20Small%20Acreages.jpg?itok=5zLn5AbR)

The opportunity to complete the workshops needed for a certificate of completion will be many and only 6 are required. There are many topics to choose from and we encourage ratepayers to choose those most applicable. Some examples are listed below:

Pasture Management  
 Shelterbelt Establishment  
 Septic Issues\*  
 Working Well Workshop\*  
 Pest Management  
 Weed Management for Acreages\*  
 Alternative Energy  
 Off-Site Watering Demonstration  
 Plastic Mulch Application

*\*Mandatory Workshops*

Recertification in the Green Acreages program must be completed annual. Recertification involves attending 2 workshops per year on topics related to Sustainable Acreage Management.

# Riparian Improvement Program Becomes Policy in the County of

**Sheila Wooten**  
Highway Two Conservation  
Coordinator

In 2013, the Highway Two Conservation Partnership initiated the "Riparian Improvement Program" with a grant from the Alberta Conservation Association. This program was created with crop producers in mind. While there are many provincial and federal programs aimed at livestock producers and improving their environmental stewardship, there was a void for crop producers.

The program was structured so that H2C would assess areas, Cows and Fish would provide Riparian Health inventories and planting would be completed by the H2C partnership. By doing this, producers increase water storage, increase water quality, decrease erosion and mitigate flooding.

Of participating municipalities, the County of Barrhead ratepayers embraced the program. Agricultural Fieldman Marilyn Flock saw this and created a policy incorporating the program into the County of Barrhead



County of Barrhead Assistant Agricultural Fieldman Kyle Meunier and Highway Two Conservation's Nola Fulcher planting poplar sprigs at a Riparian Improvement Program Site

Agricultural Service Board. Under the policy, County ratepayers who participate in the program will receive \$500 per acre of land planted to native vegetation up to a maximum of 10 acres for a period of five years. This policy is the first of its kind in Alberta.

Through the hard work of Agricultural Fieldman Marilyn Flock, Assistant Fieldman Kyle Meunier, Penny Stephani, Dawnia Myshak, Nola Fulcher and Sheila Wooten, 4.1 ac of land that was previously cropped was planted to native grasses and trees in 2014. In 2013, 25 acres of riparian area was protected and in 2014, almost

30 acres were protected.

It is expected that with the creation of this policy, the program will gain even more momentum in the County of Barrhead and other H2C partnership municipalities. Athabasca County has two ratepayers planning on participating in the program for 2015 as well as the continuation of the sites already involved in the program in the County of Barrhead.

If you or someone you know is interested in this program, contact Highway Two Conservation for more information.



Weed pressures and smooth brome are common sights in riparian locations. At this specific site, beaver have heavily removed mature trees allowing the Common Tansy and Smooth Brome to take over



# Long Term Water Management Plans

From the December 22, 2014  
Issue of Agri-News

Winter is a really good time to sit down and have a look at your water resources and identify any risks," says Melissa Orr-Langner, agricultural water engineer, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Edmonton. "It's the perfect season is to spend some time working on your long-term water management plan (LTWMP)."

A LTWMP will help to ensure that a farm has adequate and sustainable water sources to meet the present and future water supply and water quality needs, says Orr-Langner.

"Although individual LTWMP's may vary, all plans should address the security of a supply during drought periods, as well as ways to protect the supply from contamination or improve water quality. Ideally the LTWMP should cover the complete extent of your farming operation, either owned or regularly rented (if you are allowed access to the water supplies or sources available on them). Some more remote quarters or

parcels of land can be left out if they do not have a water shortage and the water cannot be considered a water asset that can be shared with the rest of the farm."

The key parts of a LTWMP plan are:

- a map identifying all the water sources on a farm including those not currently in use
- an estimation of the total amount of water the operation needs in a year
- an estimation of the amount of water the operation has or is capable of producing
- a calculation of whether there is a surplus or shortfall in water sources
- an assessment of any risks that might impact sources
- identifying actions to address any risks

Some of the examples of risks you might identify might be inadequately sized or poorly placed dugouts, or old wells that might pose a



contamination threat of the groundwater source," says Orr-Langner. "You should also identify any sources that are susceptible to drought or any contamination risks that are on the farm."

Orr-Langner says the plan itself may suggest some proposed projects or actions. "Some of these may be expansion of water sources, such as undersized dugouts, or the creation of new water sources such as dugouts or wells. You may also want to look for new efficiencies in your operation, such as pipelines to transfer water to areas where it is needed.

"There is funding available under Growing Forward 2 for new water sources such as wells and dugouts, as well as for decommissioning of old wells or well pits," adds Orr-Langner. "In order to be eligible for this funding, you'll need a long-term water management plan and have it reviewed and approved by an ARD water specialist prior to the project being started."

For more information, go to the On-Farm Water Management webpage.

Contact:  
Melissa Orr-Langner  
310-FARM (3276)

## Community Garden Launched in Westlock

On January 12, the Town of Westlock responded to a letter sent by Highway Two Conservation and Westlock County as to the possibility of leasing a specific parcel of land for free for ten years. They said yes and with that, the **Westlock Community Garden** was born.

The location chosen is close to seniors housing, apartment complexes and schools and it is hoped that this garden has the same positive effect as the Barrhead Community Garden did in 2013. Thus far, the response from the Westlock Community has been warm, with St. Mary's School and Westlock Elementary both renting plots.

The garden will begin with 20 plots with two separate sizes. 10 ft x 20 ft and 20 ft x 20 ft. It is hoped that the Westlock Food Bank will join the soon-to-be-gardeners and that donations can be given to help the less fortunate in the community.

Initiatives like this rely on the community to keep their momentum and there is room for everyone at the Westlock Community Garden. It is the groups hope to offer classes to participants and the public at large.

If you would like to donate your time, old garden equipment or just want to know what is going on with the Westlock Community Garden, contact Westlock County Agricultural Services Manager Jacolyn Tigert or Highway Two Conservation Coordinator Sheila Wooten.

## H2C and Plastic Mulch– Best of Friends

Since 2012, H2C has been helping rolls of plastic mulch get into the arms of area ratepayers. This mulch was used on new shelterbelt in the area and this spring, we hope to help again.

Shelterbelts can be of great value to farm operations, acreages and for aesthetics. Plastic mulch helps lessen the cost and time involved in getting newly planted trees off to a very important strong start. Mulch also improves water conservation for the seedlings, which is a vital component to successful seedling establishment.

If you are interested in Plastic Mulch, H2C can assist in locating an applicator, can provide instruction and can locate plastic mulch, sourced from Bioway Gardens.

Contact H2C for details and to book your mulch today!

## “Pond Days” set to expand for 2015

Highway Two Conservation has been delivering a wetland education program to partnership municipalities elementary student for a number of years and in 2015, the number of students participating is expected to grow. It is H2Cs hope that Neerlandia School in the County of Barrhead and various schools in Athabasca County as well as Dapp School in Westlock County will join us on the exciting and informative days.

The program is meant to enrich the curriculum of grade five students and provide information on water quality that they may not otherwise be exposed to. These programs are delivered in partnership with the Alberta Conservation Association and also provide a focus on trapping and wilderness safety.



### For More Information Contact:



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Highway Two Conservation

### A Partnership Between:



growing opportunity

## Upcoming Events– Watch your local paper for dates and times or call H2C for more information and early registration!!

### Athabasca County

- Livestock Predation– Feb 19th
- Lake Water Quality– TBD

### County of Barrhead

- Shelterbelt Workshop– Feb 26
- Solar Energy– Mar 26
- Pruning Workshop– Apr TBD
- Container Gardening– TBD
- Small Pasture Management– TBD
- Well Decommissioning– TBD

### Sturgeon County

- Shelterbelt Workshop– Feb 25
- Crop Production Update– Mar 10
- Pruning Workshop– TBD
- Vertebrate Pests– TBD
- Pocket Gopher Trapping– TBD
- Well Shocking– TBD
- Septic Workshop– TBD
- Working Well Workshop– TBD

### Westlock County

- Shelterbelt Workshop– Feb 26
- Solar Energy– Mar 26
- Pruning Workshop– April 6
- Septic Workshop– TBD
- Small Pasture Management– TBD