

The Raven and North Raven Watersheds

Since the 1970s, corridor fencing has been the favoured option for landowners along several spring-source streams near Caroline, such as the Raven and North Raven rivers. These streams have low gradients, and are stable, meandering systems with very high values for fisheries and water quality. Streambanks are composed of fine soils and without vegetation can be very erodible. With the assistance of provincial agencies and conservation groups many kilometres of these streams have been fenced, crossings installed and improved water sites developed. Although corridor fencing has meant loss of some riparian areas to agricultural production, this fencing has had other benefits. Stream fencing created many opportunities for rotational grazing, by dividing larger pastures into smaller units with less variation. This has helped deal with distribution problems, by giving livestock less choice, and allowing better control to effectively use upland areas of many pastures. Fencing, with improved water development, reduced veterinary costs,



especially foot rot which is a problem with livestock use of wet soils in riparian areas. Many people have seen reduced livestock deaths from drowning, either young stock in spring high water, or animals falling through the ice.

Streambank fencing provided valuable insight into the vegetation potential of many reaches and the extent of recovery possible with the removal of grazing pressure. The restoration of trout habitat and angling success has also translated into business opportunity for some landowners. Water quality improvements, based on less erosion, reduced sediment transport and better nutrient management, are important to downstream water users, including domestic water supplies for towns and cities.



1973 - before streambank fencing.



1986 - streambank fencing has allowed banks to revegetate, improving bank stability and water quality.

Grazeable Corridors - An Alternative

Many corridor fences create a space too narrow to be effectively grazed. If the goal is to have some grazing use, a wider corridor could be fenced. Wider corridors would be cheaper to build and maintain with some grazing benefits. When reintroducing grazing into the corridor, these things need to be considered:

- ◆ grazing should be temporary and use may not happen every year;
- ◆ the corridor isn't a place to park livestock, so use should be short and not more than a few days;
- ◆ multiple entry and exit locations will help distribution in the narrow corridor; and
- ◆ avoid the vulnerable periods of spring and fall and use only after riparian recovery has occurred.



Building a wider corridor provides the potential of some grazing and a reduction in maintenance costs.