

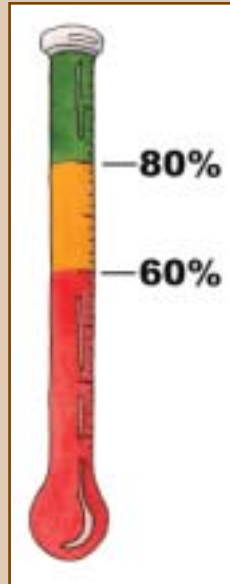


Take the Next Step

Link Measurement to Action

The step of measuring riparian health is really just the end of the beginning. When you look at the final score you might be pleasantly surprised to find your riparian areas are intact, mostly functioning, with just a few "hot" spots. You might also be surprised to find what you thought was intact and healthy isn't and you face some real issues. The categories of health are the first level of diagnosis. Take a reading with the riparian thermometer.

For the next level of diagnosis, take a closer look at the scores for the individual questions.



If the reading is 80% or higher...

- ◆ Your riparian area is performing well - Congratulations!
- ◆ Ask yourself how you can maintain this condition.
- ◆ Make a record of your present management practices and share that information with others.

If the reading is between 60 and 80%...

- ◆ There are signs of stress, but many riparian functions are being performed - don't jump off the bridge!
- ◆ It is time to carefully watch and pay attention to management.
- ◆ Changing practices now will be relatively painless compared to later.

If the reading is below 60%...

- ◆ This riparian area needs attention - the red lights are flashing! Many riparian functions are impaired, or missing.
- ◆ Think about how to stabilize these areas to prevent their condition from worsening and management to improve them.

RIPARIAN HEALTH ASSESSMENT - FIELD SHEET					
Landowner/lessee: <i>South Fork</i>		Date: <i>1 June 02</i>		Reach No.: _____	
Stream/River: <i>Beaver Creek</i>					
Site Description: <i>Lower end of Bull Pasture</i>					
		Scores of N/A			
		Actual		Possible	
1. Vegetative Cover of Floodplain and Streambanks	6	4	2	0	4 / 6
2. Invasive Plant Species	3	2	1	0	7 / 3
	3	2	1	0	2 / 3
3. Disturbance-increaser Undesirable Herbaceous Species	3	2	1	0	7 / 3
4. Preferred Tree and Shrub Establishment and Regeneration	6	4	2	0	4 / 6
5. Utilization of Preferred Trees and Shrubs	3	2	1	0	1 / 3
					<i>moderate use of willows by cattle and moose</i>
6. Standing Decadent and Dead Woody Material	3	2	1	0	2 / 3
7. Streambank Root Mass Protection	6	4	2	0	4 / 6
8. Human-Caused Bare Ground	6	4	2	0	4 / 6
9. Streambank Structurally Altered by Human Activity	6	4	2	0	0 / 6
10. Pugging and/or Hummocking	3	2	1	0	7 / 3
					<i>at crossing and watering site</i>
11. Stream Channel Incisement (vertical stability)	9	6	3	0	6 / 9
					<i>initial signs of downcutting</i>
TOTAL		35		57	

Vegetation canopy is reduced (Q1) and weeds and disturbance species (Q2&3) have increased in abundance on the site.

Shrub species are regenerating well (Q4) but utilization may be too high to sustain them (Q5).

Questions 7 & 8 show the early stages of decline in deep-binding root mass and an increase in human-caused bare ground.

Livestock are exerting physical impact at crossings and watering points (Q10). The stream is still able to access it's floodplain (Q11), but early signs of downcutting are apparent.

What are the **immediate** issues?

- ◆ Utilization of shrubs is high and may be impeding regeneration and streambank rootmass protection. That may be resulting in the stream beginning to downcut, which if left untended may sever the riparian area from it's water supply.
- ◆ The amount of bare ground may indicate too much pressure. That is giving weeds and disturbance species a competitive advantage over native plants, including trees and shrubs.

$35/57 = 61\%$ Healthy, with problems.

If the stress on this reach continues, there is a risk of losing several riparian functions.