

Weeds and Riparian Health Assessment and Inventory

Riparian health assessment helps producers and communities to determine the "health" or function of their riparian areas. Not only can a riparian health assessment provide a state of the environment report to answer "Where are we at?", it can be very useful to assist in making informed management decisions and monitor changes in the future to address the question: "Did we get there?".

Part of any riparian health assessment includes an evaluation of the amount of both **invasive plants** and **disturbance-caused undesirable herbaceous species** present on the site.

Invasive plants are typically non-native species that can cause economic or environmental harm. They are generally aggressive and hard to remove once established. They include most noxious and restricted weeds.

Disturbance-caused undesirable herbaceous species includes most nuisance weeds, as well as many other plant species that respond to site disturbance. Disturbance-caused undesirable species include native and non-native species that tend to increase with site disturbance, and are regarded as undesirable because they do not perform optimal riparian functions (e.g. provide deep-binding root mass for bank protection). Such site disturbance is often linked to a downward trend for plant communities from the potential natural community, and reduced riparian function or "health".

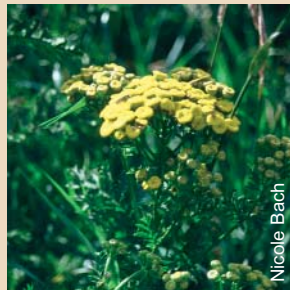


When conducting a riparian health inventory, a standard list of invasive and disturbance-caused undesirable plants is used to ensure consistency and accuracy.

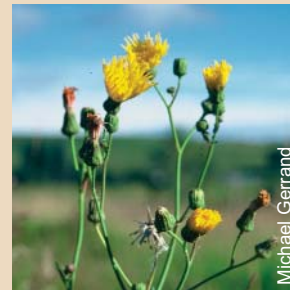
Invasive and Disturbance Plant List Available

The Cows and Fish program has developed a comprehensive list of invasive weeds and disturbance-caused undesirable plants for use in riparian health assessments and inventory. This list is a tool that landowners, resource managers, and communities can use in understanding riparian health assessments and in examining their own riparian areas. Copies of this list are available from the Cows and Fish offices (see contact information below).

Common Invasive Plants



Tansy

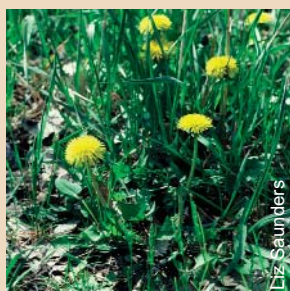


Perennial Sow Thistle



Ox-eye Daisy

Common Disturbance-caused Undesirable Plants



Dandelion



Foxtail Barley



Common Burdock

Working with producers and communities on riparian awareness

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Cows and Fish Partners

Producers & Community Groups, Alberta Beef Producers, Trout Unlimited Canada, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Environment, Fisheries & Oceans Canada, Agriculture & Agri-food Canada - PFRA, Alberta Conservation Association

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