

## Watershed Stewardship Tour September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009



The OWC's Rural Team was bound and determined to travel throughout the entire Oldman basin for their first stewardship tour and amazingly they did just that! The tour showcased the diversity of stewardship initiatives implemented by landowners and Watershed Stewardship Groups throughout the basin.



The day started off at the Turin Hutterite Colony where we discussed wintering site management as well as other changes they have made in their operation which benefit both the Colony and the watershed.



From there we stopped at a site along the Lower Little Bow to discuss Watershed Evaluation of Beneficial Management Practices (WEBs). WEBs is designed to measure the performance of selected agricultural beneficial management practices (BMP's) at a watershed scale.

Heading west to Pincher Creek we learned about the rural and urban community driven watershed stewardship partnership between the Town of Pincher Creek and the Pincher Creek Watershed Stewardship Group. The groups worked together to improve the riparian health along Pincher Creek by increasing bank stability which in turn increased the overall health of the system.



We all enjoyed the sunshine while we ate our lunch along the confluence of the Drywood and Yarrow Creeks, at the Bruder Ranch. After lunch we learned how the Drywood/Yarrow Conservation Partnership have taken an ecosystem approach to stewardship by proactively addressing human/wildlife conflicts in the area, and continuing to develop more stewardship projects such as winter watering systems to improve riparian condition of the watershed.



The Rural Team was inspired last year when they traveled down to Montana to witness the Blackfoot Challenge. They were so inspired that they decided to bring a number of concepts north which has since developed into the Watershed Legacy Program (WLP). The WLP, like the



Blackfoot Challenge, is designed to assist watershed stewardship groups and Landowner groups in implementing stewardship initiatives to improve watershed health and function. The Team was very excited to unveil the WLP's Pilot Project along the Belly River which included riparian corridor fencing and a spring development.



The final stop of the day was to look at the bioengineering completed along a section of Lee Creek. This project was designed to reduce the amount of erosion occurring at that site and hopefully regain stability of the banks. Also discussed at the site was the biological control of invasive leafy spurge using beetles along Lee Creek.

We ended the day at Lee Creek by settling in down by the creek side where we enjoyed a good old fashioned pig roast and were able to visit and reflect on what we saw throughout the day. Overall it was a long, but very inspiring day and we hope to do it again next year!

