

# Hardisty Creek Restoration Project

The Hardisty Creek Restoration Project is a community-based endeavour to help restore fish and fish habitat and the overall aquatic health of the Hardisty Creek watershed, while promoting watershed awareness and education. The project was launched in 2003, in recognition of UNESCO's International Year for Fresh Water.

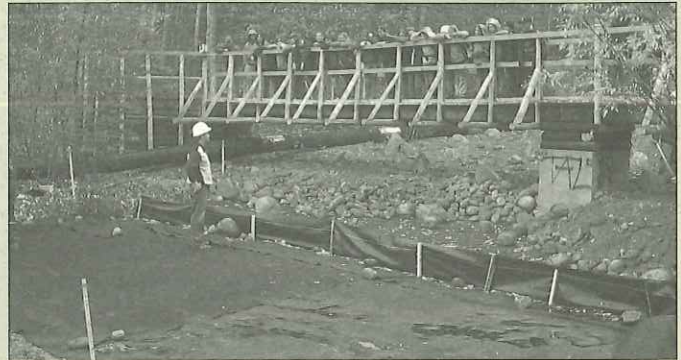
*The Hardisty Creek Restoration Project stakeholder group includes representatives from the Athabasca Bioregional Society, Foothills Model Forest, Town of Hinton, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Transportation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Hinton Fish and Game Association, and Hinton Wood Products (formerly Weldwood). Canadian National Railroad is also pursuing initiatives to improve the quality of the Hardisty Creek watershed.*

Hardisty Creek flows approximately 16.5 km from its headwaters on High Divide Ridge to its confluence with the Athabasca River at Hinton. The upper watershed is currently largely undisturbed. Within the lower watershed stream crossings and land development have adversely affected fish habitat and fish passage.

In October 2003, Foothills Model Forest retained Golder Associates Ltd. to conduct fish habitat and fish passage assessments at selected locations along Hardisty Creek. Habitat assessments focused on rainbow trout, bull trout and mountain whitefish.

The project included the development of a detailed plan to guide stream restoration activities at specific sites along Hardisty Creek. These sites include the section of Hardisty Creek within Kinsmen Park, and three stream crossings (Robb Road, Hardisty Avenue, and Hinton Pulpmill Road).

Phase I of the Hardisty Creek Restoration Project was accomplished in October 2003 when Canadian National Railway restored fish passage through a culvert initially installed in 1927.



**Hardisty Creek foot bridge near CNR crossing**

Phase II was completed during October 2004 and included the restoration of fish passage through the Hardisty Avenue culverts and the restoration of fish habitat through Kinsmen Park. The Hardisty Avenue culverts were barriers to fish passage, but with the creation of a large riffle and outflow protection, the culverts were backwatered to allow fish to pass through. Habitat features such as pools, riffles, meanders, and boulder clusters were created in Hardisty Creek where it flows through Kinsmen Park. Willow wands and grass were planted along the streambanks.

A community 'Big Splash Event' held on October 9, 2004 brought people together to help restore a much loved community creek, learn more about watersheds and get their feet wet planting vegetation.

The Hardisty Creek Restoration Project is ongoing with potential habitat work to be considered downstream of Kinsman Park and detailed assessment of crossing performance within town limits upstream of Hwy 16. Hinton Wood Products also has plans to replace the crossing on the Pulpmill site. Interpretive signs are also going to be constructed in areas where stream habitat work and crossing repairs have taken place.



**Restoration of Hardisty Creek through Kinsmen Park**



**Restoration of fish passage through Hardisty Creek culverts**