

Magazine Mission Statement

Publisher/Editor Information



### Pileated Woodpeckers on Bighill Creek



**Above:** The Pileated Woodpecker shown above was spotted a number of times on the Bighill Creek this past winter. They are the largest member of the North American woodpecker family.

### Brook Trout Hatch on Millennium Creek



**Above:** This juvenile brook trout or parr was one of many observed on the lower reach of Millennium Creek this May. The trout hatched from the spawning beds on the lower reach of the creek in the late spring.

### Volunteer Riparian Planters - Hard At Work



**Above:** Volunteers from "Friends of Nose Creek" planted 1,000 native plants this spring, along the banks of West Nose Creek. Well Done Friends!

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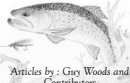


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Articles by: Guy Woods and Contributors

### Program Partners



"Sorry We're Late"

This issue of the magazine was released late due to computer and software glitches.

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March 2018 Issue



### Early May Plants are Growing Well



**Above:** This native willow was planted three weeks earlier, on West Nose Creek in Calgary. Other plants that were planted in May are also doing very well. So far, everything about this year's crop is looking good.

### Past Willow and Tree Planting is Starting to Show



**Above:** This stream bank stabilization site was first planted in 2015, as part of the Bow Valley Riparian Recovery and Enhancement Program. The thick cover of native willows was planted on an eroding stream bank on Bighill Creek, in the Town of Cochrane, Alberta. The plants have stabilized the eroding stream bank and they are now providing shade and cover for resident trout. It is a simple way of improving water quality and creating fish habitat at the same time.

### Pursuing The Elusive Giant Brook Trout



**Above:** This chunky giant was caught and released on a very small stream, in a tight cover of willows. Large brook trout like this are rare, but they are out there, hiding in thick cover, where they feel safe from the outside world. This trout was caught in late August, yet it had brilliant fall-spawning colors. What a treat!

### Fly Tying Helps Keep The Fly Fishing Interest Up!



**Read More**  
Flies like this version of the popular Pheasant-tail nymph will catch trout in most fly fishing situations. I showed you the original Frank Sawyer pattern in a previous issue, but I thought I would show you one of the many other variations that you can tie this pattern in. I like to use a similar shade of dubbing for the thorax, similar to the natural color of pheasant tail used in the pattern. Another great choice for the thorax is peacock herl.

### Right Photo:

These willows were planted right along the water's edge on West Nose Creek in 2015. They are starting to provide good quality habitat along the stream banks. In a few more years the branches will start to constrict the flow and increase the velocity in the channel. This will help flush out any silt on the bottom.



**Above:** Planted native willows along the water's edge are now starting to dominate the once thick stands of canary grass. The willows and canary grass are providing great overhead cover for resident trout populations. In this photo you can see that much of the channel is flowing under the canopy of hanging willows and shoreline grass. This will only get better over time.



### Left Photo:

These willows were some of the first planted on Nose Creek in Airdrie. The growth is slow, but they are still hanging in there, on poor quality soil. Over time, more organics in the soil will help maintain a healthy riparian zone along the creek. Many areas of Nose Creek were transformed into a channel to deal with flood and development. This left the creek with poor soil quality along the banks. Presently, it is hard to grow willows and trees in these areas.

# Stream Tender Magazine



The Simple But Effective Flashback Nymph



The thorax on this nymph was a mixed blend of both milk and squirrel dubbing. Both furs have spiky guard hairs in the mix.

When the pearl or opal iridescent Mylar first hit the shelves of fly shops, fly tiers were quick to start using the material in many of the most common popular nymph fly patterns. I was no different. It was a wonderful material for adding to the shell back nymph patterns and also as a ribbing material on popular fly patterns like the Hare's ear nymph.

It took me a while to discover that if you use Mylar for a flashback pattern, you should double back the material and tie it off at the head. This prevents the Mylar from slipping thru the binding grip of the tying thread. Adding a bit of head cement to the head is tied off is also a must.

This past winter I tied up a variety of flashback patterns for my own personal stock and also for sale. I tie the pattern in shades of olive, tan, cream and grey mixes. Of course using a head head

Most of the nymph sizes that I fish are between size 18 and 14 but this winter I found myself building my stock of size 10 and 12 hook size, in a variety of colors. It seems that larger hook sizes also seem to sell better. I guess some fly fishers still think trout. "The Bigger the Fly—The Bigger Of course using a head head

## West Nose Creek Plantings are Growing Well



Above: These willows were planted in 2015, along the stream banks of West Nose Creek in Calgary. They are coming along very good, thanks to the rich soil that they were planted in. In a few more years the willows will provide great cover and shade over the stream channel on West Nose.



## Stream Tender Store

**New Fishing Book**  
by Tim Wozniak

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1, 2 & 3 weight and 4 & 5 weight

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## What is Going On Out There?



Above: This particular squirrel was always keeping an eye on me this winter, while I walked the pathway along Bighill Creek. The squirrels love to nest in large mature poplar trees along the lower reach of the Bighill Creek.



Above: This selection of flashback nymphs were tied on size 10-2X nymph hooks. The larger bead heads were tungsten and they will take the nymphs down deep on the swifter flowing big waters of the Bow River and other fast flowing mountain streams.

## 2018 Bow Valley Riparian Recovery and Enhancement Program Update

On June 5th, this spring, we wrapped up the final riparian planting for the spring season. The last day saw 300 of the willow and tree crop planted on West Nose Creek in Calgary. This brought the total for the spring season to 9,700 native plants, another great year for riparian restoration work.

Since the program was started in 2014, we have planted a total of 60,614 native willows and trees along over 30 kilometres of stream bank, on three area streams. The streams are Bighill Creek, West Nose Creek and Nose Creek. All of these local streams are tributaries to the Bow River in our nearby watershed.

Here is the breakdown for planting during the last 5 years of the program.

Year:	Plants:
2014	10,524 plants
2015	14,895 plants
2016	16,425 plants
2017	9,070 plants
2018	9,700 plants

If ever there was a more environmentally friendly program in our area, I would like to know. The benefits of a healthy riparian zone on all three streams in the program will become very evident in the following years to come. Cleaner water, along with conservation of what is flowing down these systems. More fish and wildlife habitat, and the creation of wildlife corridors along the planted areas of the streams.

It is all good and hopefully we can continue this program into the future. I know that I am willing and ready to carry on.

## Great Fish Habitat Taking Shape Along Bighill Creek

Some of the first plants that were planted along the water's edge are now starting to encroach over the water's surface on Bighill Creek. This is exactly what the plants were intended to do. Native willows and trees are now providing great fish habitat and it will only get better.

The plants are totally natural in the landscape that they were planted in, so there is no clue that humans had a hand in their existence. This was the original goal in our riparian recovery work; it must all appear to be all natural in appearance. From this point on, the mother nature will take her course and the creek will transform in a new natural indigenous growth along natural way.

The willow plants are now growing out over the water providing shade and in some cases constricting the flow. This constriction will increase the velocity of flow in the channel and help keep the streambed clean from silt and provide habitat for invertebrates and trout.

The added shade will help keep the spring water of the stream cool and this is also good for fish and other life forms in the stream's flow. The added willow and tree growth will help in the bio-filtration of any surface run-off that enters the creek. A long term impact of this was the water will result from a more healthy riparian zone on work; it must all appear to be all natural in appearance. From this point on, the mother nature will take her course and the creek will transform in a new natural indigenous growth along natural way.

There is also a long list of wildlife, other than fish, which will benefit from the new natural indigenous growth along the stream banks. More habitat for nesting birds and better cover for fur bearing animals. This transformation was all part of the original objectives for a riparian planting program.



Above: This single willow that was planted along the water's edge is now growing out and over the stream's surface. This photo shows how our planting method keeps the plants close to the water's surface.



Above: These willows, which were planted on an eroding stream bank in 2014, are now growing out over the surface of the creek. This type of overhead cover provides great fish habitat for the resident trout population in Bighill Creek. This will only improve over time, as the new native willows grow into maturity.

## New Generations of Trout Still Hatching Nearby

It was very encouraging to witness another year of new trout hatching this late winter and early spring on a few project creeks nearby. With the collapse of the Bow River fishery between the Ghost Reservoir and Bearspaw, due to what is suspected to be whirling disease, just having a new generation of healthy trout hatching is important.

The new trout may be brook trout, but this is ok by me. The fact that these trout spawn in the very headwaters of a few local spring feeder streams, is probably why they have not been effected as much by the whirling disease epidemic in our local waters.

I know that some successful brook trout reproduction is also occurring, but this is harder to verify, because the brook trout are spawning on the main stem of the Bighill Creek, where observing newly hatched trout is very difficult, for a photographer like me.

Brown trout have a natural resistance to the whirling disease parasite, so this is good for the local fishery. At least we can assume that some trout will still be present in our reach of the Bow River into the future.

In any case, it was very good to see the first newly hatched brook trout on Millennium Creek this past January. It is an annual event that I look forward to every year now. I have been monitoring the spawning habitats on Millennium Creek since they were first built in 2008 and the spawning channel which was constructed in 2010.

So far, I have not witnessed any signs of the whirling disease in the newly hatched trout in recent years. Fortunately, the proximity of the ground springs that feed Millennium Creek are close enough to the spawning habitats that the spores from whirling disease and the tube worm host are not present.



Above: This tiny trout larva was one of many newly hatched trout on Millennium Creek this past winter. All of the new trout were observed to be healthy swimmers and actively feeding on microscopic insect life. The water where they hatch is pure ground spring fed water with no whirling disease virus present. This new trout will help to maintain the trout population on Bighill Creek into the future.

## After The Flood

This willow was planted last fall in October, along West Nose Creek in Calgary. The dead grass around the cutting shows that the plant survived the flood earlier this spring, and now it is starting to show good signs of growth. A true survivor.



Lots of plants are covered with floating debris during flooding events on the streams. Sometimes the new branches and leaves are broken off during this natural occurrence. However, there will always be true survivors that continue to grow. Sometimes, the dead grass around the planted cutting will help protect the new plant from rodent damage.

The plant in the photo to the right was one of 400 that were planted in October last year, as part of an Evergreen Canada and HSBC planting event on West Nose Creek. Fortunately, we had a pretty good survival rate for this particular crop, despite a flood that occurred back in late April, along the stream, in Calgary.

Experiencing some loss is a part of riparian restoration work. The key is not to give in, but rather to keep at it and over time you will feel good about the

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## ATCO Marks Sixth Year of Riparian Planting

ATCO first joined Bow Valley Habitat in its riparian planting program in 2013. This year's planting marks the sixth year in the City of Calgary. This past June their help in transforming our local stream riparian habitats. The willow and tree plants along the ATCO group has planted on Bighill Creek and West Nose Creek over the six year period.

As BVHD's organizer of the planting events, I really look forward to working with the ATCO team every year. The always provide a great group of

For the last four years of the program, ATCO volunteers have been planting on West Nose Creek. This year, we planted 300 native stream riparian plants along the ATCO group has planted on Bighill Creek and West Nose Creek over the six year period.

The ATCO contribution in both planting events. I really look forward to working with the ATCO team every year. The always provide a great group of



Above: The ATCO group of nine volunteers takes a water and rest break in the shade, after planting the first half of the native willows and trees.



Above: The planting area that ATCO worked on is in bad need of some healthy riparian willows and trees. This photo shows one of the many oxbows or meanders in the stream channel, in this reach of the West Nose Creek.

# Stream Tender Magazine

June 2018 Issue

## This Spring's Volunteer Planter Contribution



It was great to see the CW Perry Middle School group on the creek planting again this spring. Last year, the kids planted along the stream bank of the Nose Creek and this year they are doing the same length of stream, on the opposite shoreline.

What I really enjoyed was the enthusiasm of these young people's interest in an environmental cause, such as riparian planting and recovery. They know that positive action is required on local environmental goals, along with a to examine a few of the stream's natural inhabitants, mainly aquatic insects.

The nice thing about undertaking a riparian planting program which is so close to their school, is that they witness the transformation of creating a healthy riparian zone, over the years to come. As the willows and trees grow, the people that planted them will also see this new growth.

The planting system used for the Friends of Nose Creek, in the City of Airdrie, was simple. A hole is punched into the soil along the creek. A native willow or tree cutting is placed in the hole, along with some new soil. The hole is tamped around the plant and watered.

The team of volunteer student planters planted 200 native plants in just over an hour of planting. There were also some breaks in the work local environmental goals, along with a to examine a few of the stream's natural inhabitants, mainly aquatic insects.

Bow Valley Habitat Development would like to thank Mike Dow for organizing this year and last year's witness the transformation of creating a healthy riparian zone, over the years to come. As the willows and trees grow, the people that planted them will also see this new growth.

## Friends of Nose Creek in Calgary



When Jon Bertie first contacted me about doing a planting with the Friends of Nose Creek, it was exciting news. I was very pleased to find out that a local Calgary organization had similar interests in the Nose Creek watershed. The group was also keen on doing some planting along some stream banks.

Friends of NC had already been active doing stream clean-ups and this is great for the health of our local waters. Meeting people that are willing to spend some of their valuable time, picking up other peoples waste is a rare thing. And we all benefit from the groups hard work.

We organized a two day planting event this past May and we managed to plant a thousand native willows and trees along West Nose Creek. The group was a lot of fun to work with.

I think that the organization has done a fine job of utilizing social networking to try up some interest and provide volunteers with an opportunity to get involved. Some parents recognize the importance of teaching their children that getting involved in local environmental causes is a good way into the future.

For our two day team, they will be free to drop by the planting site when ever they choose, to watch as the new crop of native plants grow in future years. It usually takes approximately 5 or 6 years before the new plants will stand out on the landscape.

Hopefully, the Friends of Nose Creek will continue with a planting program in the next few years. The more planting teams on our local waters, the more rapid the transformation of the new riparian zone.

## Whirling Disease Update-2018

When whirling disease was first detected in Alberta in 2016, I was suddenly faced with the reality of a possible total collapse of our area trout fishery. Like everyone else that was interested in trout fishing, this was terrible news. At that point in time I decided it was about time to start educating myself a little more about this new epidemic on our trout waters.

Because there was plenty of statements made that there was no cure for whirling disease, it was pretty depressing to ponder the thoughts of what our future trout fishery might end up like in a few years time. However, it was a good idea to investigate the matter before I got too deep into the doom and gloom of the possible impacts.

The thought of doing some website searches to find more info resulted in an important discovery. While exploring the possibility of a disease resistant strain of rainbow trout, I came across a few articles about the Hofer strain of rainbow trout. It was a German rainbow trout, originally from the Kootenay system, which was immune to whirling disease parasites.

This was fantastic news! Over time it became apparent that this series of articles would lead to more encouraging information, about how this disease resistance of certain rainbow trout strains would be the new hope for the future of our trout fishery. Maybe there is no cure for infected trout, but building an immunity to the disease would be the long term objective for fisheries managers.

Recently, read that biologists and other scientists have identified the gene that determines why the Hofer strain of rainbow trout has a resistance to the parasite. Apparently, the gene is part of the interferon or immunity system in the trout's skin. This was very good news as well. If scientists now know what the gene Nome is, they can pursue the possible genetic alteration options in creating a disease resistant strain on our local trout populations. This stuff is too complicated for me to understand fully, but it does bring hope for future possibilities.

There does seem to be light at the end of the tunnel for those of us that are deeply concerned about the future of our local trout fishery. This is something we could all use right about now!

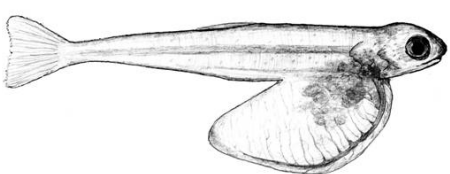
## Next Year's Riparian Program

There may be a fall planting this year yet, but regardless, in the fall I will be working on organizing another planting year in 2019. This year marks the fifth year of the Bow Valley Riparian Recovery and Enhancement Program, so adding another season in 2019 would be great for the streams in our area. The more riparian planting completed, the better.

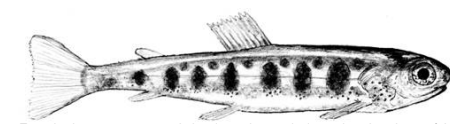
As usual, BVHD will set a goal of 10,000 plants for 2019, but if we are a little under or over that's ok. Last year we planted 9,070 and this year it was 9,700, this is good enough to make a successful year's program. The impact that we have made over the five years of planting is really significant and I would like to maintain that.

The streams in the program are starting to show the benefits from our riparian planting, with cleaner water and stream beds. The stream bank stabilization from our plants is helping to hold the soil along the water's edge in place. Sliding, eroding stream banks are now stabilizing.

## When are Trout The Most Vulnerable to Whirling Disease?



Juvenile rainbow and cutthroat trout are the most vulnerable to whirling disease during the first 5 months of their early life stage. The young fish have under developed spinal columns and until the cartilage has ossified or hardened, the parasite can damage it. The damaged cartilage leads to deformity and loss of the ability to swim normally.



Trout that have a resistance to whirling disease have antibodies in their skins that can fight off the parasite. However, once the parasite passes the skin, the trout is infected and spinal damage will occur. Scientists have recently identified the gene that makes trout disease resistant in their skins. Hopefully this new discovery will lead to better options in creating a disease resistant strain for wild trout fisheries. The science of disease resistant strains is much more advanced south of the border. Hopefully, some of the findings will make their way into a long term strategy for Canadian fisheries scientists and managers, north of the border.

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