

## September 2011 Update

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## 2009 Willow Planting Site Update!

In 2009, Branches and Banks Organization and BVHD teamed up with the Millennium Creek Fly Fishers, to plant a small section of stream channel on Bighill Creek, with willow and tree plants.

A total of 450 collected willow and tree cuttings were pushed into the stream bank on an old beaver dam site that had exposed mud flats needing some new growth. The stream banks at this site were crumbling into the creek and some new willows and grasses would help speed up the stabilization of this unstable area of the creek.

This September, I visited the site once again to take a few photos and some video of how the willow growth was progressing. The areas that had been planted with willows were covered with a tall crop of canary grass that was up to 7.5 feet tall, so the willows were hard to see.

I spent a half an hour tramping down the grass around the planted willows so that I could take a few photos and notes on their growth. The willows were up to 1.5 metres in height and doing just fine. There was signs that beavers had been harvesting some of the limbs, but this did not kill the plants, so all is well at the site.

This particular site exemplifies how fast willows can grow when they are planted in the right type of environment! It has only been 3 years since the cuttings were put into the ground and already they are established far enough along so that their survival is not a concern!



**Above:** A section of canary grass was tramped down to expose approximately 15 willow plants that were planted in 2009, along Bighill Creek.

**Below:** This is a 2009 photo of the willow cuttings, one month after they had been planted at the same spot shown in the 2011 photo above.



## Branches and Banks - Wattle Fence - Bank Erosion Site-Update!



**Above:** This is a 2011 photo of the wattle fence (left side of the stream channel) that was constructed along the outside bank of a meander on Bighill Creek, in 2008. The project was completed by volunteers from the Branches and Banks Organization, based out of Cochrane, Alberta.

The fence is constructed entirely from willow cuttings, so there are no nails, bolts or brackets. This fence consists of vertical willow stakes being driven into the streambed along the waters edge and then lengths of willow trunks are woven on the inside and outside of the vertical stakes to create a retaining wall that will prevent soil from the bank, from slipping into the stream channel.

Because all of the materials used to build this fence are live cuttings or stakes, they will develop roots and start to grow. The photo above, shows how well the site has grown into a crop of willows along the waters edge!

Coming Soon - 2011 Fall Trout Spawning Update!