

Annual Stewardship and Monitoring

This summer Legacy continues its annual **stewardship and monitoring visits** on six young conservation easements (CEs) in Mountain View County.

These visits incorporate **detailed documentation with photos and GPS points, inventories of plant and animal species, and assessments of range & riparian health**. Ideally, these annual reports will be used to affirm the legal CEs and to paint a picture of the long-term condition of these unique zones of our ecosystem.

One of the most important (and exciting) parts of a new conservation easement is **observing how the land changes even from one year to the next**, sometime due to natural cycles and sometime due to management changes. Because we are dealing with CEs that are only a few years old, it's **important to establish some solid records** of what is going on with the land, every year! Eventually monitoring may only be required every 3 to 5 years, depending on need.

The presence of flowing water creates an interesting, dynamic environment, where significant changes can be noticed from one season to the next. **Legacy is fortunate to have flowing water bodies included on all our conservation properties**. An unusual couple of years for water flow in the Red Deer River basin has undoubtedly resulted in some of the changes which have been noted in many riparian areas.



Cow Moose & Calf / Karen S. Fahrlander

Near Bergen, on Community Creek, a new riparian fence has resulted in significant vegetative growth along the creek. This vegetation helps filter water, stabilize banks, and regulate water temperature, supporting the ecosystem on this property and downstream.

Monitoring visits help Legacy and the landowners connect annually about all the amazing birds and critters the landowners have seen over the year and talk about any management concerns they may have. The visits also help Legacy capture the story of the land over time.

Keep your eye on the [Land Trust Tuesdays video series](#) for a closer look at one of our monitoring visits.

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