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### **Greencover project on the Carrot River**

Grain, oilseed and pulse producers who own farmland adjacent to watercourses in the Carrot River Basin may be interested in following a four-year demonstration project about the environmental impacts of farming along riverbanks

The project, called Riparian Management in a Cultivated Landscape, will demonstrate riverbank or riparian management techniques to prevent soil erosion.

The target area is farmland adjacent to watercourses in the Carrot River basin, which runs from Wakaw through Kinistino and Fairy Glen to Arborfield, and will concentrate on three demonstration sites.

Led by the Saskatchewan Conservation Learning Centre Inc., located near Prince Albert, the project is funded by Greencover Canada Technical Assistance Program. Project partners are the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association, the Saskatchewan Conservation and Development Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, and SAFRR.

"We have one site now, and we need two more," said Al Foster, Forage Development Specialist with Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization (SAFRR) in Tisdale. "It's a bit of a commitment on the part of the producer. These will be demonstration sites and there will be an annual field day to show producers the benefits of the practices we'll be using on the land."

Foster said the sites will be needed beginning spring 2005.

"The purpose of the study is to demonstrate the environmental impacts of Beneficial Management Practices or BMPs associated with riverbank or riparian areas," Foster said.

Project agrologists will work with the individual landowners or co-operators to demonstrate various BMPs. There are numerous techniques used to prevent erosion in riparian areas, Foster said. Some include the proper design and grassing of runways in order to prevent gully erosion; seeding forage or wooded buffer strips along riparian areas to trap sediments; and direct seeding of annual crops adjacent to riparian areas so as to leave sufficient standing stubble and crop residue, which will prevent sediment and nutrient loss. The key is to increase environmental stewardship while remaining economically viable.

"Most riparian management and extension activities in Saskatchewan have been targeted to livestock producers and mixed farmers. However, there are areas where agriculture revolves solely around annual cropping. With larger equipment and the emergence of precision farming, producers can view wetlands and the meandering nature of creeks and rivers as a hindrance," Foster said.

These riparian areas do perform valuable environmental functions, says Foster, and there are advantages in protecting them.

Producers who may be interested in taking part in the project are asked to phone Mitchell Japp, Riparian Project Co-ordinator with the Conservation Learning Centre Inc., at 306-953-2796; or phone Foster at 306-878-8890.