

Day One - Track Two

Wednesday, March 22nd, 2017

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Wildlife-Friendly Erosion and Sediment Control: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Presenter: Risa Olekshy, Manitoba Infrastructure

Biography



Risa Olekshy has worked for Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and is currently an Environmental Impact Assessment Biologist with Manitoba Infrastructure. For the past 11 years and she has helped the province 'Green Up' its day-to-day operations and construction practices. Risa enjoys the challenges of achieving Erosion and Sediment Control success in diverse geographic environments and with limited funds. She believes in using environmental practices rather than products wherever possible, and works with others to develop their own grass-root solutions. She is Vice President of the Erosion and Sediment Control Association of Canada and a Director of the Canadian Chapter of the International Erosion Control Association.

Abstract

Roadside Ecology has historically suffered across Canada as traditional highway construction and maintenance practices often result in serious environmental impacts. Manitoba Infrastructure is working to strike a balance between protecting the natural environment while achieving its mandate of ensuring safe, reliable and sustainable infrastructure for citizens. Examples of wildlife-friendly erosion and sediment control successes and 'lessons learned' are shared in this presentation. Experiments and solutions that will be covered include:

- Creative, low-cost, no-kill methods of deterring beavers from plugging culverts.
- Mandating 100% biodegradable, polypropylene-free Erosion Control Blanket to prevent trapping reptiles, amphibians, small mammals and fish.
- Dramatically reducing the use of Sediment / Silt Fence.
- Implementing erosion control practices, rather than just Material products and late-stage sediment control.

Challenges abound in balancing the environment and infrastructure, and 'Good' can be seen as 'Bad' or even 'Ugly' depending on one's perspective and paradigm. An example: it's well recognized that the loss of small wetlands has dramatically reduced wildlife populations of all species across

southern Canada. Where appropriate, constructing shallow puddles or 'Habitat Pools' of water at culvert outlets can restore critical habitat for wildlife at the bottom of the food chain. But – do these create roadside hazards for the travelling public? With a collaborative approach and perseverance, common ground can be found to successfully meet both ecological and infrastructure objectives.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the challenges and importance of protecting roadside ecology adjacent to infrastructure;
2. Identify examples of low cost, wildlife-friendly ESC methods; and
3. Discuss lessons learned in balancing roadside ecology with infrastructure.