

RIPARIAN ASSESSMENT

Riparian areas are the biologically rich and productive shoreline areas at the edges of lakes, streams, wetlands and rivers.

A GIS-based method and data set was created to assess riparian intactness (or condition) at a watershed scale, including lakeshores and streams. The riparian area was assessed for 50 metres back from the water line and given an intactness rating based on what is visible from satellite imagery.

INTACTNESS RATING

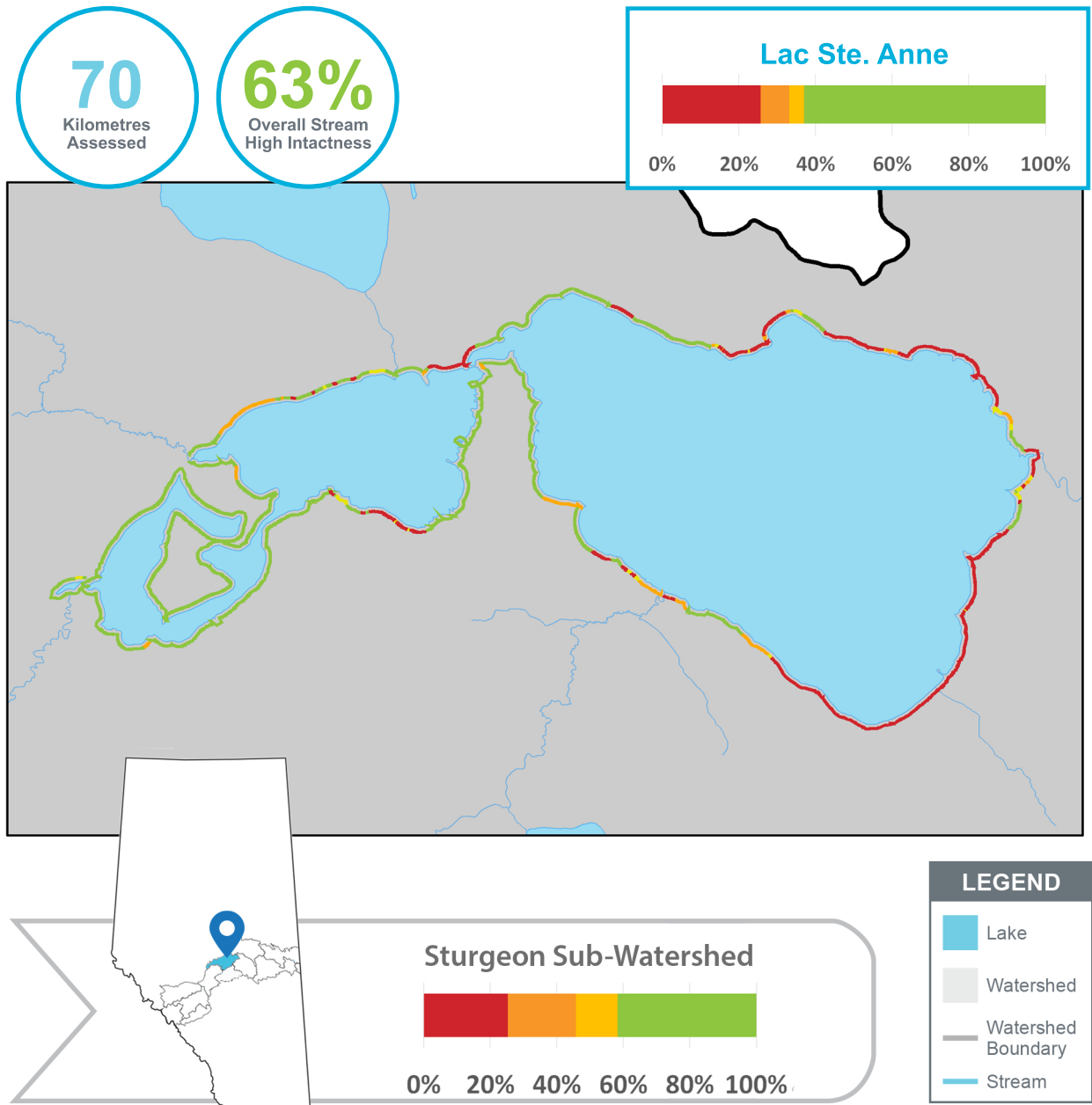
HIGH Vegetation present. Little or no human footprint.	LOW Vegetation present. Human footprint prevalent.
MODERATE Vegetation present. Some human footprint.	VERY LOW Vegetation mostly clear. Human footprint dominant.

Summary of Results

Data Year: 2020

Lac. Ste Anne's shoreline high intactness level was at 63% out of the 70.4km assessed. 3.8% was moderate, 7.5% was low, and 25.5% was considered at very low intactness. The primary land uses in the watershed are agricultural production and urban development.

Lac Ste. Anne



Why are riparian areas important?



IMPROVE WATER QUALITY by trapping sediments, filtering nutrients and pollutants, reducing enrichment that leads to increased aquatic plant and algal growth;



MITIGATE FLOODS AND DROUGHTS by storing and slowing the release of water and reducing erosion;



IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY by providing fish and wildlife habitat and cooling water temperatures;

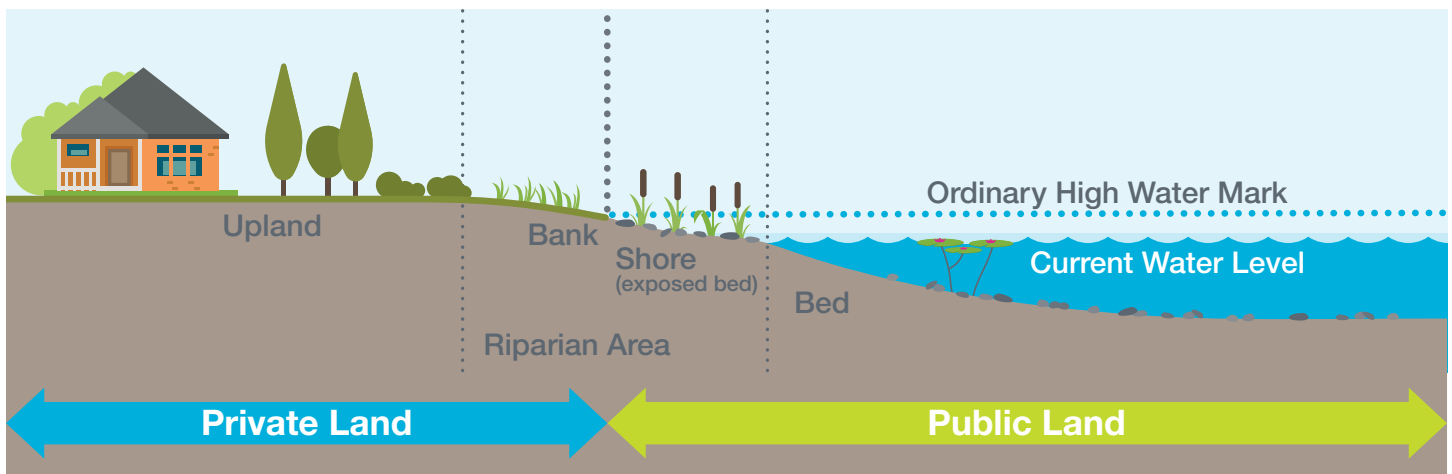


PROVIDE AESTHETICALLY PLEASING AREAS for recreation or cultural activities; and



ADD LOCAL ECONOMIC VALUE by increasing property values or providing areas for nature viewing.

Where is a riparian area?



How can you improve the health of your riparian area?

- Leave your shoreline natural—don't remove any plants, grasses or aquatic vegetation as they all play an important role in keeping your lake healthy.
- If your shoreline has been cleared of vegetation, replant with native plants as much as possible and watch for invasive species. Report as appropriate.
- Learn more about the health of your riparian area
- For larger areas, create a management plan to improve the intactness of the riparian area over time
- More resources are available at alberta.ca search "riparian"