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# Pheasants Forever wants to save ditches and rights-of-way

Written by Don McCracken Thursday, Aug 10 2023, 5:00 AM

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Perry McCormick, Pheasants Forever Canada

Pheasants Forever Canada is getting the message out that road right-of-ways and ditches are a very integral part of the eco-system.

Perry McCormick with the group, says the primary contribution they bring is filtration of chemicals used by farmers who are growing crops for our food.

"Some of the advantages they bring may not come to mind instantly but those places, that lush vegetation on the edge of a field, the primary contribution it brings to our society is filtration."

"Producers today have to put a lot of products on the landscape to get the crops they do today and the byproduct, or those chemicals have to go somewhere and that vegetation in those ditches holds those nutrients up on the landscape and puts them to work. In fact, you're fertilizing the ditches and keeping the fertilizer out of our water and instead growing lush vegetation that helps pollinators and insects and biodiversity of all sorts from bugs and beetles to birds and mammals," says McCormick.

He says the group is trying to get out an awareness of how important road rights-of-ways and roadside ditches are.

The land is owned by the Province and maintained by local municipalities.

McCormick says the fact that farmers are willing to use the land for farming takes the maintenance off their plates, but he'd like them to take a bigger role in making sure they're still being preserved.



A road right-of-way that disappeared.

There's also a message for farmers.

"I think today's farmer is starting to understand the benefits of edges on their properties. That might not have been the case in the past few decades but as we learn and grow, we start to understand the benefits these things bring and to the ag society these ditches and edges bring a variety of insects that prey on other insects that feed on the crops so they can actually reduce some of their inputs by keeping these edges intact," he says.



There's a lot of pressure on producers to feed the world and McCormick says he understands that every square inch of soil is under some threat from a habitat standpoint, but it is public land and should be protected for all of society to benefit from

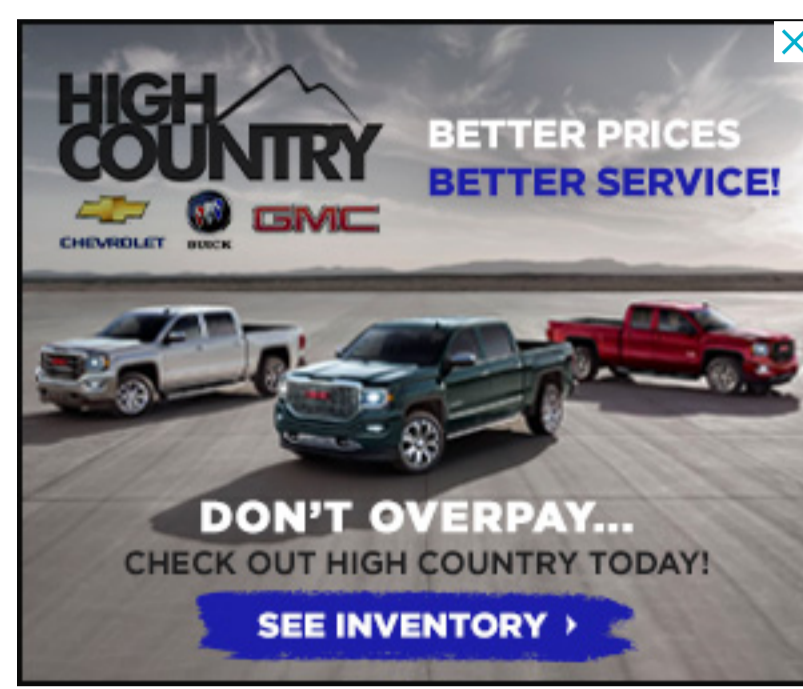
He says it's understandable as well that farmers would farm right-of-ways rather than leave them as a fire hazard, weed hazard or for people to drive down and leave their little.

He says, "It's way easier to farm it, and make a few bucks, until you don't have any anymore."



A right-of-way that has disappeared.

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