



ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

E-NEWSLETTER

When the well's dry, we know the worth of water - Benjamin Franklin

November 2016 | ISSUE 16

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All hands on deck to keep aquatic invasive species out of Alberta

The AWC released a report with seven recommendations to improve aquatic invasive species (AIS) management in Alberta earlier this year. More details below.

Bridging the gaps--five ways to boost Alberta's water literacy

An AWC report with five recommendations to improve water literacy in Alberta was released earlier this year. Details appear below.

Water for Life implementation review report approved!

The AWC board approved this committee's report and 12 recommendations to advance the implementation progress of the *Water for Life* strategy! More details below.

Lake Watershed Management Project Team presents draft recommendations

This project team has prepared draft recommendations to improve lake watershed management in Alberta. See details below.

Bridging the gaps--five ways to boost Alberta's water literacy

Diving in--lakes in Alberta video

We know water is wet, but what else can you tell us?



Evaluating Water CEP Project Team presents findings and draft recommendation themes

The Evaluating Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity (CEP) Team shared its findings with the AWC board. Details below.

Next AWC Board Meeting

THE WATERFALL

Alternate Director profile of Jamie Wuite, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Jamie's first involvement with the AWC was as a member of the **Water Strategy Renewal Project Team** in 2007. As a biologist with a science degree in Aquatic Ecology from the University of Calgary and a Masters in Water Resource Management from the University of Alberta, Jamie's research involved measuring changes in runoff water quality that arose from the adoption of beneficial management practices. His personal interests include family ski trips and long-distance solo motorcycle trips (picture of Jamie on a bike trip below).

In 1997, Jamie joined Alberta Agriculture after working as an environmental consultant in Calgary and Fort McMurray. His first position with the department was as a field technician on a wastewater treatment project called "Snowfluent"--he spent two winters making artificial snow from malting plant effluent and liquid hog manure. Since then, Jamie's role with the Government of Alberta (GoA) has evolved from applied research to policy development and management.

His perspective on water management in Alberta is that it has to be more than simply a relationship between the regulator and the regulated. From looking at the depth





The next AWC board meeting will be held Thursday 16 March, 2017 in Edmonton.

AWC Presentation Opportunity

Would you like to raise awareness in your group or

and breadth of the AWC membership, Jamie suspects he is not alone in this view. The *Water for Life* strategy and the AWC embody this perspective. "We don't all have the same views or the same responsibilities with respect to water management, but all members of the AWC have a stake and a voice. The AWC provides a forum for the thoughtful and respectful exchange of various member interests," says Jamie.

He has been involved in several AWC projects but the most memorable one for him was the *Water for Life* Renewal of 2007. "Consensus decision making isn't easy and can't be done quickly. However, the water management community in Alberta is close-knit and the people you work with on an AWC team are likely the folks you'll be working with on other initiatives throughout your career."

He thinks that the AWC's CEP work was an opportunity to showcase efforts of the major water-using sectors--in particular the irrigation sector--and the work of the GoA that supports those efforts. His experience with CEP work has shown that Alberta Agriculture and Forestry needs to address water challenges in non-irrigated areas, just they do in the irrigated areas. The volumes of water involved are not as great, but the issues can be just as contentious. Jamie is proud of the work AWC sectors have done on CEP planning, implementation and reporting. For industrial and municipal sectors to set aspirational goals related to their own water use, speaks volumes about both the "can-do" attitude of sector leaders in Alberta, and the safe, collegial forum we've created with the AWC for trying these sorts of things. He doesn't think a CEP initiative like this would have been as successful in other jurisdictions.

In the next 20 years, Jamie would like to see AWC members continue to cooperatively create solutions before underlying issues become critical. AWC initiatives such as the CEP project, the aquatic invasive species project, and the Wetland Policy project have been fundamental pieces that were required before the member sectors represented at the AWC could implement important changes.

THE CONFLUENCE

sector about the AWC? Staff would be happy work with you to determine how we can meet your needs. If you are interested in such a presentation, please contact staff or email info@awchome.ca

AWC Newsletter

The AWC's newsletter will arrive at your inbox after each board meeting, providing a quick update for interested parties. Comments and suggestions are welcome, so please tell us what you think. Email your feedback to info@awchome.ca. We look forward to hearing from you!

Photo credits: Jamie Wuite, Nicole Kimmel, Dave Rushford, Cenovus Energy, Susan Sly, Anuja Ramgoolam

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Water for Life implementation review report approved!

An important task for the AWC is to regularly assess the implementation progress of the *Water for Life* strategy. Each review is conducted by a committee (picture of committee members below) in a spirit of adaptive management where an evaluation of progress highlights strengths and weaknesses. The AWC board approved the committee's final report in November 2016, with 12 recommendations related to:

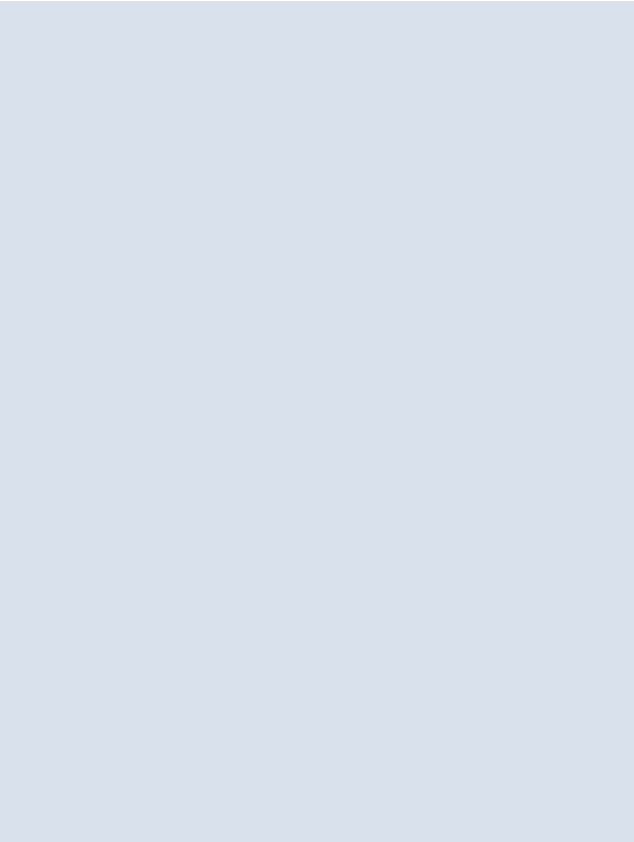
- investing in sustainable, regional water and wastewater solutions particularly in Indigenous and rural and small communities
- defining, inventorying and assessing source water quality, quantity, and risks and incorporating findings into decision-making processes
- establishing ecosystem health criteria, undertaking health assessments and incorporating findings into decision-making processes
- establishing a transparent and accountable flow management system
- communicating how the regional planning process is managing healthy aquatic ecosystems
- developing a provincial water reuse policy
- improving Albertans' understanding of the water management system, ensuring science and research informs decision making and engaging partners and the public in research, citizen science, monitoring and education initiatives
- improving the accessibility and availability of *Water for Life* documents and water-related information
- clarifying commitments to *Water for Life* partnerships, continuing to resource partnerships and confirming how their policy advice and plans integrate into decision-making processes
- *Water for Life* partnerships continuing to investigate and leverage additional resources to support their work
- AWC continuing to serve as a forum for the water conservation, efficiency and productivity initiative developing and monitoring performance metrics and publicly reporting progress made towards achieving *Water for Life* goals



The report will be finalized and printed in the next month or two. More information about the *Water for Life* Implementation Review Committee can be found [here](#).

Lake Watershed Management Project Team presents draft recommendations

In February 2015, the AWC established a Lake Watershed Management Project Team to document and assess the state of lake management planning and governance in Alberta; identify gaps, redundancies and opportunities for improvements; and develop recommendations to support effective lake management in



Alberta. The team documented the state of lake watershed management by compiling lists of key players, legislation and policies, tools and resources and completed or ongoing lake planning initiatives. In partnership with the Alberta Lake Management Society, the team held a workshop in 2015 to validate preliminary findings and explore solutions to challenges identified. The team presented draft recommendations in the following areas:

- set strategic directions for a provincial lake watershed management policy
- consolidate science and knowledge on Alberta lakes and their watersheds
- prioritize lake watershed management needs
- support the development and implementation of lake watershed management plans
- strengthen regulatory and voluntary tools to improve lake watershed management
- improve access to tools and education

More information about the Lake Management Project Team can be found [here](#).



Evaluating Water CEP Project Team shares findings and draft recommendations

In early 2016, the Evaluating Water CEP Project Team was established to report on the contributions of water-using sectors towards achieving *Water for Life* goals, the 30% target and CEP desired outcomes. In 2015, sectors provided progress reports to the AWC. Presentations included key successes and challenges in implementing CEP activities and obtaining targets set out in sector plans. The following aspects were documented by each sector:

- sector-specific context and criteria for success in CEP
- implementation successes and barriers
- contributions to the three goals of *Water for Life*, the 30% target and CEP desired outcomes

In some cases, sectors also relied on additional information from Alberta's Water Use Reporting System to supplement their report. After reviewing individual sector reports, the team evaluated the AWC CEP process, which involved identifying evaluation criteria, assessing the process and identifying strengths, gaps and opportunities for improvement. Based on its key findings two recommendation themes were presented to the AWC board in November, emphasizing a need to:

- maintain the culture of CEP work and continue to report on sector progress
- improve data collection, availability and usability and raise awareness of the importance of reporting

More information about previous CEP work, including CEP plans developed by the seven major water-using sectors, can be found [here](#).

WATER PIPES

All hands on deck to keep aquatic invasive species out of Alberta

A report released by the AWC in August recommends seven ways in which Alberta can improve its management of aquatic invasive species (AIS). AIS include plants, mussels, fish, amphibians, and snails (e.g., Purple Loosestrife pictured below). Once established, these species can seriously threaten Alberta's water management facilities,



water supply infrastructure, aquatic ecosystems, recreation, and human health, with direct and indirect economic costs to the agriculture sector, industry, and municipalities. “A recent study estimates that an infestation of invasive mussels would create about \$75-million in annual losses if they were to establish themselves in Alberta’s lakes and rivers,” says Gord Edwards, executive director of the AWC.

The recommendations support work by the GoA to develop a provincial AIS management program. “Although five AIS have been found in Alberta, those that have been so damaging elsewhere, such as zebra and quagga mussels, Asian carp and Eurasian watermilfoil, have not yet become established here,” says Kate Wilson, Provincial Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist. “This puts Alberta in a good position to adapt experience and knowledge from other jurisdictions and take a strong proactive management approach. Keeping these species out of the province will be much more cost-effective than trying to eradicate or manage them later.”

Many groups are already working to prevent AIS from entering Alberta and to manage existing threats, and the report recognizes these efforts. However, it stresses the need for continued leadership, expertise and support from the GoA, noting that a successful outcome will rely on collaboration with national, regional and local partners.

The report, *Recommendations to Improve Aquatic Invasive Species Management in Alberta*, focuses on five areas that are essential to good AIS management: prevention, public awareness, communication and collaboration; long-term management; monitoring; inspections; and enforcement. Specific timelines are associated with each area, with some recommendations calling for significant progress as early as 2016, and others going into 2018.

The report is available [here](#).

Bridging the gaps--five ways to boost Alberta's water literacy

A report by the AWC recommends five ways the Province can improve water literacy in Alberta. "Being water literate means understanding the significance of water in life, where water comes from and how to use it sustainably," says Gord Edwards, Executive Director of the AWC. It is an integral component of the *Water for Life* strategy, which states that "Albertans will have access to the knowledge needed to achieve safe drinking water, healthy aquatic ecosystems and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy."

"Water literacy forms the foundation for successful education and outreach, by cultivating a stewardship and compliance ethic and enabling informed public input to important decision-making processes," says Deanna Cottrell, Water Risk Specialist with Shell Canada. The AWC recommendations support work by the GoA as it develops a provincial water literacy strategy.

The project found that water literacy programs cover a variety of topics, target audiences and delivery areas but gaps still exist in the issues addressed, and where and to whom the programs are delivered. Albertans sampled as part of a water literacy assessment had awareness and knowledge of some water topics, but were less equipped with the skills to take action. "To help Albertans develop skills and act to protect and conserve water resources, water literacy practitioners need to design and deliver programs that fill the gaps in water topics, build skills and encourage this action," says Sharina Kennedy, Education and Outreach Specialist with Alberta Environment and Parks.

The report, *Recommendations to Improve Water Literacy in Alberta*, looks at five areas for improving water literacy: increased collaboration among water literacy practitioners, provision of tools and knowledge to assess program success and effectiveness; alignment of topics, audiences, delivery areas and methods; stronger capacity among practitioners; and assessment of water literacy among Albertans. Specific timelines are associated with action in each area, with some recommendations calling for progress as early as 2017, and others going into 2018 or being implemented annually on a continuous basis.

The report is available [here](#).



Diving in--lakes in Alberta video

The AWC released a short video about lakes in Alberta. To view the video go <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGX99W2pA9Q>

We know water is wet, but what else can you tell us?

Environmental literacy is the ability of people to think, plan and act with the environment in mind. Following up on the recommendations made by the AWC's Water Literacy Project Team, the Government of Alberta is asking Albertans to fill out a survey to determine their water literacy level, including their knowledge, attitudes and actions concerning water. To take the survey, do an online search for: **Water Literacy Survey Alberta**

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