



# ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

## E-NEWSLETTER

November 2015 | ISSUE 14

*Life is simple, just add water!*

Working together to ensure and sustain

- ↳ a safe water supply,
- ↳ a healthy environment
- ↳ and a prosperous economy



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Exciting features from the [Alberta Water Council \(AWC\)](#) as well as director and alternate profiles.

### [The Confluence](#)

Find out about the great work project teams and working groups are doing!

### [Water Pipes](#)

Your link to AWC business.

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## **Drips and Drops**

### **Aquatic Invasive Species report approved!**

After two years of hard work by the AIS Project Team, the AWC board approved the team's report and seven recommendations to support AIS management in Alberta. More details below.

### **New work kicks off at the AWC**

Two new projects are underway. Work on the *Water for Life* implementation review began in June, and a project team on water

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| <b>Water Pipes</b> | <i>Major water-using sectors present CEP reports</i> |
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conservation, efficiency, and productivity was approved at the October board meeting.

### **AWC released 2014 annual report**

The AWC released its 10th annual report this year, summarizing activities for the calendar year 2014.

### **Next AWC Board Meeting**

The next AWC board meeting will be held Thursday April 7, 2016 in Calgary.

## ***THE WATERFALL***

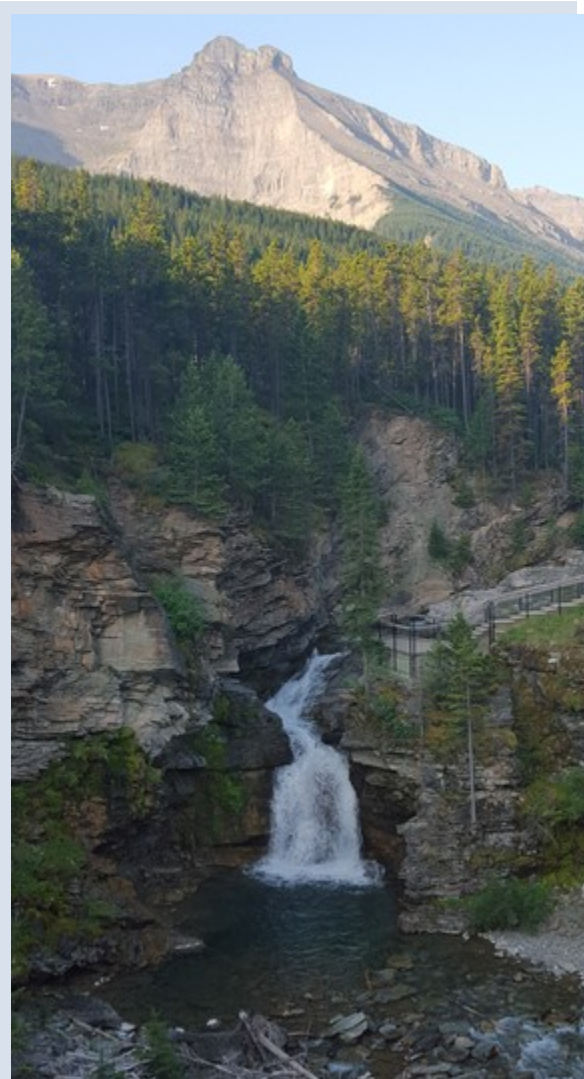
### **Director profile of Ron McMullin, Irrigation sector**

Ron has represented the [Alberta Irrigation Projects Association \(AIPA\)](#) on the AWC Board of Directors since 2008. Ron's experience started as a kid, swimming in irrigation canals and fishing in any lake or stream he could get to. He completed a Master's degree, studying the impact of irrigation farming on the quality of water flowing back to rivers. Prior to joining the AIPA, he worked as an irrigation specialist with Alberta Agriculture, a technology transfer officer with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Research Branch, a farm safety extension specialist with Health Canada, and as a business and water program development officer with the Alberta Research Council. Ron enjoys growing watermelons, apples, grapes, vegetables, and flowers at his home in Raymond, Alberta.

Ron learned that Alberta has a growing water community with many members representing diverse views. Nowhere is this more apparent than at the AWC table. Here, Ron can share his views that water

management requires a holistic perspective and using water to grow food is a good thing. His sector values participation with the AWC. Knowledge and awareness have reduced tensions, broadened horizons, and enhanced understanding of what is considered valuable in water management. Ron is the AWC Vice- President for the industry category and contributed to many AWC working groups and project teams.





Ron believes that the consensus process is a mixed blessing – it allows everybody to be heard but it can take time and be frustrating on occasion. But when consensus is reached, a better decision results because all interests have been taken into account, and everyone can say “I can live with this.”

“If someone is considering being on an AWC committee, working group or project team, it can be a great experience. You get to know a group of people as you share thoughts, listen to others, and work to develop recommendations to improve water management in Alberta,” advises Ron. “The water Conservation Efficiency and Productivity (CEP) process was important as it helped irrigation districts solidify efforts to improve water CEP with specific targets,” Ron adds. They have been able to document significant reductions in diversions to districts and also increase on-farm production per unit of land.

Ron notes two key accomplishments for the AWC over the years: bringing recommendations to the Government of Alberta that are vetted through an organization of many interests, and helping create a “water community” where Albertans come to know the issues that the environment, governments, and industry face.

In the future, Ron would like to see Alberta identify the origins and movement of non-point sources of pollution so that biological and engineering solutions can be implemented to eliminate forms of this type of pollution.

More information about the AIPA can be found [here](#).

## ***THE CONFLUENCE***

**Aquatic Invasive Species Project Team report approved!**

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## AWC Presentation Opportunity

Would you like to raise awareness in your group or 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](mailto:info@awchome.ca)

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## AWC Newsletter

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

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**Photo credits: Ron McMullin, Marie-Claire St-Jacques, and Anuja Ramgoolam.**

The [Aquatic Invasive Species \(AIS\) Project Team](#) was established in October 2013 to highlight gaps and opportunities for improving awareness, communication, and coordination of AIS activities in Alberta. The team's tasks were to document prevention and management approaches to inform the state of AIS in Alberta, document prevention and management approaches for AIS in other jurisdictions, determine a the need for a common definition for AIS, evaluate barriers and opportunities for improving AIS prevention and management within Alberta, and develop recommendations to improve awareness, communication, and coordination of AIS activities. The work of the team paralleled work by the Government of Alberta to develop a provincial AIS program. The team presented its final report and recommendations to the AWC board in October, emphasizing a need to:



- continue working with governments and national, regional and local partners to enhance the effectiveness of the provincial AIS program, focusing particularly on: prevention; increasing public awareness of AIS and their potential impacts, targeting high-risk audiences; and supporting AIS-related stakeholder communication and coordination networks
- collaborate and support industry, non-government organizations, academia and governments to develop and disseminate effective AIS tracking and control options for long-term management
- work with partners to communicate success stories of AIS management
- work with [AEMERA](#) to develop and implement a provincial AIS monitoring plan for fish, invertebrates and aquatic plants, with assistance from stakeholders including citizen scientists
- maintain mandatory watercraft inspections and begin inspecting other vectors of potential

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introduction. This would include working with stakeholders where inspections are planned to raise the profile of the issue and increase buy-in from the public

- have a protocol to ensure fishery officers and fishery guardians are educated and trained on their authority to enforce AIS legislation
- share information on enforcement activities and penalties with stakeholders and the public to raise the profile of the issue

More information about the AIS project team can be found [here](#).

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## Water Literacy Project Team presents findings and draft recommendation themes

The AWC established the [Water Literacy Project Team](#) in March 2014 to provide recommendations to improve water literacy in Alberta. The team conducted a survey of water literacy practitioners to inventory current programs, products, assessments, and research in Alberta. Using the results, the team compiled a list of program best practices. A consultant designed a valid water literacy assessment tool, assessed a sample of Albertans, and advised on future assessment activities.

The team presented findings to the AWC board at the October 2015 meeting. Alberta has many organizations and programs that promote water literacy through various means. However, a number of areas could be improved and new areas of activity considered. The team emphasized a need to:

- enhance the connection between policy-makers and water literacy practitioners, as well as collaboration among practitioners
- improve existing tools, and provide new tools, to inform program design, delivery, and



evaluation

- strengthen the capacity and efforts of water literacy practitioners in the province.

Water literacy assessments were found to be an important tool that could be used by water literacy practitioners to assess and improve program design, delivery, and evaluation.

The draft report is undergoing sector review where all AWC Members will have an opportunity to provide feedback for the team's consideration. In early 2016, the project team will discuss feedback received and is expected to ask the board to approve the final report in April.

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

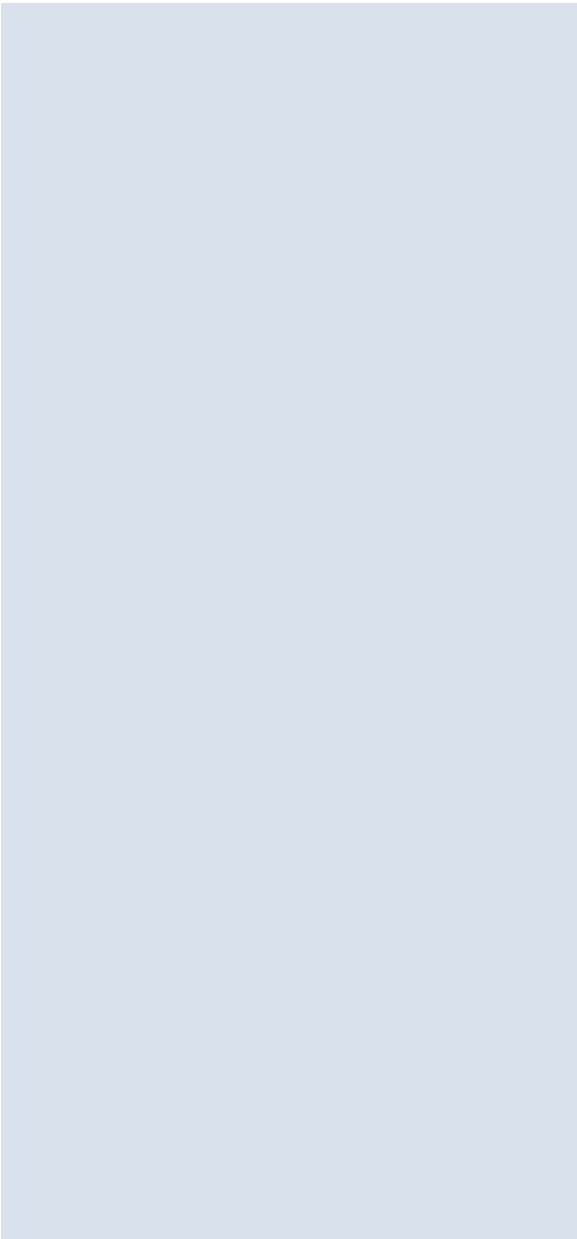
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## Lake Management Project Team holds workshop

In October 2014, the AWC established a [Lake Management Project Team](#) to document and assess the state of lake management planning and governance in Alberta; identify gaps, redundancies, and opportunities for improvements in lake management; and develop recommendations to support lake management in Alberta, including roles and responsibilities.

The team held a workshop in collaboration with the [Alberta Lake Management Society](#) on September 24 in Stony Plain. The workshop brought together 120 participants from the Government of Alberta,





municipalities, watershed planning and advisory councils, watershed stewardship groups, environmental non-government organizations, research groups, and monitoring groups. Participants provided their perspectives on the challenges of lake watershed management and opportunities for improvement. Input was gathered from round table discussions, plenary discussions, and a participant questionnaire. The team received valuable input that generally aligned with their discussions, and confirmed they are on the right path to developing recommendations. The workshop and the team identified the following gaps and opportunities for improvement:

- coordination of jurisdictions involved in lake watershed management is lacking
- technical information to inform lake management planning needs improvement
- capacity in areas of expertise, staffing, and funding for lake plan development needs to be increased
- lack of integration between land-use plans and lake watershed plans
- lack of accountability for plan implementation
- plans are inconsistent in terms of land development allowed around lakes
- provincial and municipal processes for planning, approvals, and enforcement need to be better coordinated
- opportunities exist to improve education, compliance, and stewardship among players in lake watershed management

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

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## New work kicks off at the AWC

- *Water for Life Implementation Review*

An important task for the AWC is to regularly assess the implementation progress of the *Water for Life* strategy. Reviews are undertaken by a multi-stakeholder committee at a strategic level, focusing on existing and emerging water issues in the province and the effectiveness of *Water for Life* in addressing them. Each review is conducted in a spirit of adaptive management where an evaluation of implementation progress highlights strengths and weaknesses, and recommends areas of additional focus. The AWC has completed four reviews (2005, 2007, 2009, and 2011). A committee was established in June and is reviewing the implementation progress of the strategy from 2012 to 2015.

More information about the *Water for Life* implementation review can be found [here](#).

- **Evaluating Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity**

Water conservation is a pillar of the *Water for Life* strategy. Improving overall CEP of water use by 30% from 2005 levels by 2015 was identified as an outcome in the *Water for Life* strategy (2003), and reaffirmed in the renewed strategy (2008) and action plan (2009). Since 2004, the AWC has facilitated a process where Alberta's seven major water-using sectors developed and implemented CEP plans.

Terms of reference for a new project team on water CEP were approved by the AWC board at the October meeting. Following in the footsteps of previous CEP work, this team will report on the implementation progress of sectors' CEP plans, evaluate the CEP process, and make recommendations for potential enhancements to sector CEP planning, implementation, and reporting if needed. This work aligns with the [Our Water, Our Future; a Plan for Action](#), which commits the Government of Alberta to ensuring water-using sectors make concrete, measurable, and demonstrable improvements in water CEP.

More information about CEP can be found [here](#).

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## **WATER PIPES**

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## Major water-using sectors present CEP reports

AWC hosted a session where the seven major water-using sectors presented implementation reports prior to the October board meeting. Each sector gave informative overviews of their considerations for water use, and reported on progress in implementing CEP activities and achieving targets set out in their plans. Presentations included key successes and challenges of CEP efforts, highlighting sector-specific trade-offs involved in decision making to improve water CEP. These reports will inform the evaluation process that will be undertaken by the next CEP Project Team in 2016.





More information about CEP can be found [here](#).

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