



NEWS RELEASE

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Bridging the gaps—five ways to boost Alberta’s water literacy

Edmonton... A new report by the Alberta Water Council (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 the Shell Canada. The AWC recommendations support work by the Government of Alberta 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.

Visit <http://awchome.ca/WhatsNew/tabid/55/Default.aspx> to access the report and find more information. Follow us on twitter [@ABWaterCouncil](https://twitter.com/ABWaterCouncil) and like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/awcouncil)!

The Alberta Water Council is a multi-stakeholder partnership that stewards the implementation of Alberta’s Water for Life strategy and provides advice on water management issues to its members, which include the Government of Alberta and provincial authorities, industries, municipalities and NGOs.

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