

Aquatic Invasive Species Stakeholder and Jurisdictional Review

Project Team Terms of Reference

Approved by the Alberta Water Council on June 13, 2013. Timelines amended on March 19, 2015.

CONTEXT

In October 2012, the Council approved undertaking an initiative regarding aquatic invasive species based on a statement of opportunity titled “*Safeguarding Alberta’s Water Supplies and Ecosystems from Aquatic Invasive Species*”, brought forward by the Government of Alberta. This initiative was started in March 2013.

Aquatic invasive species are becoming increasingly problematic across Canada and the United States, negatively impacting economic and social activities, and aquatic ecosystems. Some of the economic and social impacts include significant costs associated with maintaining affected water structures, and reduction or loss of recreational pursuits. Aquatic ecosystems are affected when invasive species out-compete native species for habitat and resources; they can also alter water chemistry, food webs and communities.

Alberta has been relatively unaffected compared to other jurisdictions in North America. However, the Province is increasingly at risk of aquatic invasive species establishing themselves via many pathways. Many groups are conducting on the ground work in specific areas of Alberta to prevent their establishment but such efforts are not consistent or coordinated across the province. This project is an opportunity to build on to existing work and develop recommendations that would improve coordination of the efforts of all the stakeholders involved in preventing and managing existing and emerging threats to our aquatic ecosystems.

STRATEGIC INTENT (GOAL)

The purpose of this project is to identify gaps and opportunities for improving awareness, communication and coordination of activities by stakeholders in Alberta that are working to prevent and manage the threats of aquatic invasive species. This work will include a review of other jurisdictions’ prevention and management strategies; how their stakeholders are working together to achieve shared outcomes and how these strategies can be adapted or improved for Alberta.

OBJECTIVES

- Document the current prevention and management approaches to inform the team about the current state of aquatic invasive species in Alberta
- Document the current prevention and management approaches for aquatic invasive species in other jurisdictions
- Determine the need for a common definition for aquatic invasive species
- Evaluate barriers to and opportunities for improving aquatic invasive species prevention and management within Alberta
- Develop recommendations that could improve awareness, communication and coordination of activities to respond to threats from aquatic invasive species.

KEY TASKS

- Build a work plan and operate according to its tasks and timelines
- Design and conduct a survey of key stakeholders in Alberta to understand their current prevention and management approaches for aquatic invasive species. For example:

- What are your threats? Do you have a monitoring system to detect threats? Do you have a response plan to threats and incidents? What barriers and opportunities do you see?
- Engage a consultant to conduct a review of prevention and management approaches from governments and their stakeholders for aquatic invasive species from selected jurisdictions that have similar characteristics to Alberta. The review should include aspects of: existing and emerging threats; monitoring and response plans; barriers and opportunities; legislation; governance structures; funding; education programs; definitions of aquatic invasive species; and potential economic impacts
- Evaluate barriers to and opportunities for improving aquatic invasive species prevention and management within Alberta
- Develop recommendations that could improve awareness, communication and coordination of activities to respond to threats from aquatic invasive species
- Prepare a report with recommendations
- Provide regular updates to the Council

TIMELINES and DELIVERABLES

The Project Team will provide the following deliverables to the Alberta Water Council:

- Present findings from surveyMarch 2014
- Approve the definition of aquatic invasive species (if needed).....March 2014
- Draft recommendations.....June 2015
- Final report with recommendations.....October 2015

MEMBERSHIP

The following sectors and groups have been identified as potentially having an interest in participating on the Project Team:

Irrigation, Power Generation, Oil and Gas, Mining, Large Urban Municipalities, Small Urban Municipalities, Rural Municipalities, the Alberta Lake Management Society, Fisheries Habitat Conservation, Wetlands Conservation, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, Watershed Stewardship Groups, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Alberta Innovates – Energy and Environment Solutions, Federal Government, Alberta Invasive Plants Council, Canadian Council on Invasive Species, Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network. Other groups may be identified as potential contributors or recipients of the information (or targeted with the survey) without necessarily being members of the Project Team.

The Project Team will meet regularly and will operate in a manner that is consistent with the rules, policies and procedures adopted by the Alberta Water Council, including the use of consensus to make decisions in a multi-stakeholder process.

All members of the Project Team will participate actively and will take on tasks such as proposing options/solutions, providing data and information, drafting documents, consulting with stakeholders and hosting meetings.

BUDGET

The estimated budget for this project is \$75,000:

Core funding Costs (provided by Alberta Water Council)	
Stakeholder Support	\$25,000
Hosting	\$10,000
Communications support	\$10,000

Project Funding Costs (provided by Alberta Water Council sectors) Report to assess management and prevention approaches in other jurisdictions	\$30,000
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