

Tracking Implementation Progress of Council Recommendations Update Report – April 2016 – Vol. 6

1.0 Introduction

As part of the implementation tracking system, AWC staff prepare two reports: a Detailed Report and an Update Report. The Detailed Report lists all recommendations and their implementation status (provided by the identified implementer), by individual recommendation, theme or full suite of recommendations. The Detailed Report is in table format and is posted on the Council's website.

The Update Report provides a general overview of implementation progress; it is presented at March board meetings. As part of this presentation, the board has an opportunity to discuss implementation progress and may offer advice to implementers concerning any challenges that are identified.

This Update Report focuses on general progress since the last report (March 2015), and similarly describes implementation progress by project. The date shown after the project name is when the recommendations were presented to the board.

2.0 Projects

2.1 Intra-Basin Water Movement (June 2008)

All recommendations were updated to reflect that this work is part of a broader water allocation management system review. The government decided that no major policy decisions on water would be made until public consultation had occurred.

Consequently, the implementation status of these recommendations has changed from "in progress" to "not under consideration at this time". While a formal response to these recommendations has not been provided, recommendations are taken into consideration in the course of resource management and water policy development as appropriate.

2.2 Wetland Policy and Implementation Plan (September 2008)

2.2.1 Wetland Policy

2.2.2 Wetland Implementation Plan

Updates for the recommendations from these reports were similar. AEP implemented the Wetland Policy in the White Area on June 1, 2015. Since then new *Water Act* applications for wetland development activities have been subject to the tools and requirements of the Wetland Policy. AEP is also exploring tools and avenues for wetland protection and prioritization of wetland restoration with AUMA and AAMDC, their member

municipalities, WPACs, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and regional planners. Further details are available in the detailed report.

2.3 Shared Governance (September 2008)

Recommendation 4, 6 and 9 were have minor updates about internal processes of some of the partnerships.

2.4 Watershed Management Planning (September 2008)

An update to recommendations 5 reflects that all WPACs are undertaking State of the Watershed work. An update to recommendation 7 details that the initial focus of Watershed Management Plans is the main stem of the river and broadened as planning efforts expand. Also, WPACs develop IWMPs in various ways depending on their priorities. An update to recommendation 8 notes that the AWC includes a list of reports produced by WFL partnerships in its *Water for Life* Implementation Review, but does not review the implementation status of each watershed management plan.

2.5 Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Planning (September 2008)

Recommendations 7, 8, 9, and 16 were updated.

Recommendations 7 and 8: Update describes the interim progress reports from the Urban Municipalities, Irrigation and Forestry sectors, and the implementation reports provided by all seven priority sectors at the AWC-hosted CEP session held in October 2015. All updates are available on the AWC's website. These recommendations are considered complete.

Recommendation 9: Minor update to indicate that the fourth team, "Evaluating water conservation, efficiency and productivity" is underway and expected to bring a report to the AWC in early 2017.

Recommendation 16: Provides details on the steps some sectors have taken to engage and support all members in their sectors to undertake CEP activities. This recommendation is considered complete.

2.6 Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems (March 2009)

Recommendations 2, 4 and 5 were updated.

Recommendation 2: A study of contaminants in traditional foods was conducted in the Peace/Athabasca Delta. This study also contributed to the intent of Recommendation 1. Other work focussed on assessing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and mercury in food fish, which can have human health implications. Details were also provided on the considerations and challenges with selecting indicators for ecological monitoring.

Recommendation 4: The joint Canada/Alberta implementation plan for oil sands monitoring has completed a three-year monitoring program. A summary of results from the third year is available on the aemera.org website.

Recommendation 5: The work of the AWC's Water Literacy Project Team took inventory of water education programs in Alberta. The team's report, which is expected to be approved at the April 2016 AWC meeting, summarized the components of these programs and what made them successful. The report also identifies gaps in program delivery and makes recommendations to inform the draft water literacy strategy under consideration by the GoA. Staff consider this recommendation implemented.

2.7 Water for Life Implementation Review 2006 – 2008 (June 2009)

Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11 and 13 were updated.

Recommendation 1: Describes the work of the AWC Water Literacy Project Team in contributing to reviewing the effectiveness of GoA water education programs.

Recommendation 2: Notes that a guide for Source Water Protection in the South Saskatchewan River Basin was developed and may be used to inform a provincial-scale guide.

Recommendation 3: Relates to work in non-point source pollution. See that projects update for details.

Recommendation 4: Notes that an online drinking water system owner training course is complete.

Recommendation 6: Details activities in the area of healthy aquatic ecosystems, namely: the implementation of the Alberta Wetland Policy, the release and implementation of the Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the

Lower Athabasca River, work on a water quantity directive in areas where water management plans and frameworks do not currently exist, and the actions of the Water Conversation, including the AWC's work to inform a Lake Watershed Management Policy.

Recommendation 7: That GoA continues to review the water allocation transfer system but currently has no plans to make full scale changes as a specific project. Revisions to the system may be considered through other projects.

Recommendation 11: Notes that a special advisor to AEP on water quality is reviewing the role of WPACs as well as how and when they are funded.

Recommendation 13: That the seven major water using sectors have completed their sector CEP plans and are participating in the AWC's fourth CEP team. Details are provided in the two other CEP team Detailed Reports.

2.8 Water Allocation Transfer System Upgrade Project (August 2009)

These recommendations are being considered as part of the implementation of the Water Conversation Action Plan and *Water for Life* Action Plan renewal. Further, the update notes that a water management plan for the Milk River Basin (Alberta) is currently being developed and is scheduled to be submitted for approval in the coming months. See detailed report for more information.

2.9 Provincial Ecological Aquatic Criteria for Health (November 2009)

A minor update notes that work within AEP to amalgamate maps for Environmentally Significant Areas and Aquatic Environmentally Significant Areas into a single product is complete.

2.10 Moving from Words to Actions (June 2011)

Few minor updates on the activities of the ASN were provided.

2.11 *Water for Life* Implementation Review 2009 – 2011 (October 2012)

Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 9 were updated. Also, several updates note that this committee's recommendations are to be incorporated in the renewal of the WFL Action Plan, though the renewal is not currently scheduled.

Recommendation 1: Includes work of the Alberta Stewardship Network, in partnership with the GoA, on funding wetland projects in support of the Wetland Policy and to protect critical wetland habitat.

Recommendation 2: Notes that the Battle River has an approved Water Management Plan.

Recommendation 4: The same update on water allocation system review was provided for the intra-basin water movement project. See that update in this report for details.

Recommendation 5: The Alberta Water Research Strategy (2014) provides a framework to guide research and innovation in responding to the challenges faced by the province's water resource system.

Recommendation 6: Includes that the ASN applies for grants from AEP to provide the Watershed Stewardship Grant program to support WSGs contributions to *Water for Life*.

Recommendation 9: Notes that while the AWC does not undertake watershed management planning, the work of the Lake Management Project Team will support this aspect of watershed planning.

2.12 Sector Planning for CEP (March 2013)

A minor update was made to reflect that the fourth CEP team is underway and is expected to complete its work in 2017.

2.13 Non-Point Source Pollution (March 2013)

Recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5 were updated:

Recommendation 2: AEP addresses non-point source pollution (NPSP) using multiple initiatives (regional and sub-regional plans, Surface Water Quality Load Management Policy and source water protection plans.

Recommendation 3: AEP engages multi-sector groups through the initiatives described in the Rec. 2 update above.

Recommendation 4: Scientific knowledge gaps are addressed in other initiatives associated with NPSP (e.g., Alberta Surface Water Quality Load Management

Policy, Bow River Phosphorus Management Plan and Capital Region – Industrial Heartland Maximum Allowable Load project.

Recommendation 5: In addition to the updates for Rec. 4 above, research proposals to address NPSP were invited in the recent Alberta Innovates – Energy and Environment Solutions call for proposals.

2.14 Riparian Land Conservation and Management (March 2013)

AEP is coordinating an integrated GoA response to the recommendations. Current work focuses on determining how current and upcoming initiatives will support the recommendations with a goal of determining where there are gaps that may be addressed. Current work includes the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program, regional planning initiatives and research funding through AI-EES that considers enhanced practices for supporting riparian areas near dams, and building greater understanding of how land use affects riparian lands and wetlands in parkland areas.

2.15 Aquatic Invasive Species (October 2015)

This report was approved by AWC in October 2015 but has not been formally released to the public yet. The recommendations are aligned with the GoA’s AIS program and all but one are in progress of being implemented. One recommendation is considered not under consideration at this time since it is part of the longer-term plan of the program and requires more consideration. The detailed report will be posted to the website after the report is publicly released.

3.0 Conclusion

When reviewing the Detailed Report, it is important to understand that recommendations whose implementation status is “in progress” may not have a specific update; however, progress in many cases is being made, and it may be premature to report on work in progress.