

Alberta Water Council – Wetland Policy Project Team Terms of Reference

Prepared by the Wetland Policy Working Group

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT:

The Alberta Water Council established the Wetland Policy Project Team to develop recommendations to the Government of Alberta on wetland policy and corresponding implementation plan. The development of a wetland policy and implementation plan was identified as a key action in the *Water for Life* strategy to help achieve the goal of healthy aquatic ecosystems.

The new wetland policy will supersede the 1993 interim policies, *Wetland Management in the Settled Area - An Interim Policy* and *Beyond Prairie Potholes - A Draft Policy For Managing Alberta's Peatland and Non-settled Area Wetlands* to form a comprehensive wetland policy for the province.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Team members will support the following shared principles:

- Members will work constructively and collaboratively.
- Teamwork relies on effective information sharing between members and their constituents. Members will support this process by providing relevant, timely and accurate information for consideration.
- Members will operate in a considerate, respectful, fair and transparent manner.
- Principles of sound management will be followed such that the facilitator, under guidance of the Co-chairs, will prepare agendas that are followed with minutes recorded and distributed to members in a timely fashion.
- The team will ensure that relevant issues are brought to the table for discussion, with emphasis on resolving those issues by means of consensus. The process for consensus will adhere to the definition provided in the Alberta Water Council's terms of reference.
- If the Team cannot reach consensus on an issue, a summary of that issue and the differing viewpoints will be referred to the Alberta Water Council for advice and resolution.

TEAM GOALS/ RESULTS / EXPECTATIONS:

The Team will recommend a wetland policy and implementation plan to the Government of Alberta, based on consultation with Albertans that will contribute significantly to the *Water for Life's* goal of maintaining healthy aquatic ecosystems.

KEY ACTIONS:

The WPPT will:

- Hold monthly meetings to maintain involvement and momentum towards completing the wetland policy and implementation plan
- Hire an independent, unbiased facilitator
- Collect and review information on existing legislation and policies that affect wetlands
- Identify wetland related issues
- Review approaches to wetland conservation including mitigation options
- Identify existing data and information, information gaps, and provide recommendations to fill the gaps
- Prepare the wetland policy and implementation plan
- Design a recommended consultation strategy for the government (AENV will be responsible for implementation of the consultation strategy)
- Revise the wetland policy and implementation plan based on stakeholder consultation
- Present the recommended wetland policy and implementation plan to the AWC for approval and subsequent forwarding to government for consideration.

The above list of key actions is a reference list and not a specific limitation to the work of the WPPT.

Communications and Publicity:

The WPPT Co-chairs with support from the facilitator will report to the Alberta Water Council as indicated in the timeline below.

The Co-chairs, with support from the facilitator and Alberta Environment Communications, shall be the liaisons for the Team with media and the public-at-large.

Information Gathering:

Information necessary for the Team to complete its tasks may be obtained from any appropriate sources. In cases where critical information is not readily available, the Team will explore options to fill these needs.

SCHEDULE OF KEY DELIVERABLES:

The recommended wetland policy and implementation plan will be provided prior to September 30, 2006. The Team will report back to the AWC at the specified intervals below to give the Council an opportunity to provide feedback and approval at key decision points before the Team proceeds to the next stage. This will ensure that the AWC is fully engaged and takes a leadership role in the project as it moves forward.

Task /Deliverable	Timeline	Group Responsible
Finalize WPPT terms of reference	May 2005	AWC & WPPT
Stakeholder Consultations		WPPT
Collect and review information, legislation & policies, identify key wetland issues, review approaches to wetland conservation, & identify outstanding information gaps	June– August 2005	WPPT
Recommended wetland policy and implementation plan for AWC review and input	September – December 2005	WPPT & AWC
Recommend stakeholder/public consultation plan for AWC review and input	January – February 2006	WPPT & AWC
Stakeholder / public consultation	March – April 2006	AENV
Revise wetland policy	May - June 2006	WPPT

and implementation based on consultation feedback		
Legal review of policy recommendations	June – July 2006	AENV
Recommended wetland policy and implementation plan brought forward for AWC consideration and approval	July 2006	WPPT
Completed wetland policy and implementation plan brought forward by AWC for government consideration and approval	August – September 2006	AWC & Government

BUDGET:

It is the responsibility of the AWC to provide a budget to the WPPT for items such as employing a facilitator, information collection, research to fill information gaps, and other costs to team members (e.g. travel costs, etc.).

A budget of \$80,000 for fiscal year 2005-2006 is required. Additional funds maybe required in fiscal year 2006-2007 and will be requested by January 31, 2006. Consultation costs will be borne by government.

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership	No. of Members
<p>AWC Broad Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mining ○ Agriculture • Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First Nations ○ Federal ○ Large Urban • NGO'S <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wetland Conservation ○ Environmental • Government of Alberta <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environment ○ Sustainable Resource Development 	<p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p>

Regarding Alberta Water Council representation, each broad category will identify the sectors and individuals to represent their broad category. Each department will identify an individual to represent their department. Jonathan Thompson, Wetland Conservation and Ian Rudland, Alberta Environment will be the project team Co-chairs.

Role of Co-chairs -

- Clarify the AWC's expectations to the Team;
- Ensure the Team has adequate support to efficiently review currently available information and make informed proposals to the AWC;
- Inform the team of other programs and initiatives so the Team can avoid duplicating work being addressed elsewhere;
- Serve as liaisons to the AWC and government.
- Responsible for producing the draft wetland policy and implementation plan.

Role of WPPT Members –

Members are expected to attend meetings regularly and provide relevant, timely and accurate information for the team's consideration. If a member misses more than 3 consecutive meetings without reasonable cause, another representative from their agency or sector will replace them.

Alternate Members -

Team members may send an alternate in their stead if they are unavailable to attend a meeting. The Team member remains the formal designate to the Team and is responsible to remain informed about current discussions.

Role of Facilitator -

Under the guidance of the Co-chairs, the facilitator will prepare agendas, facilitate meetings, record discussions and develop progress and final reports that reflect the statements of Team members in a succinct and unbiased manner.

Role of Secretary -

Under the guidance of the Facilitator and Co-chairs, the secretary will record the meeting minutes, compare minutes to the facilitator's recorded discussions and provide a set of succinct written minutes to the Team.

SIGNIFICANT PARAMETERS OR CONSTRAINTS:

The development of a wetland policy and implementation plan is complex, but it is essential to achieve the goals of the *Water for Life* strategy.