



FACT SHEET: *Water for Life* Partnerships

“Partnerships” is one of three key directions in the *Water for Life* strategy; this direction states: *Water for Life partners are empowered, informed and fully engaged in watershed stewardship.*

The *Water for Life* (WFL) strategy involves a network of partnerships to effectively tackle Alberta’s watershed management challenges. The partnerships were established under a shared governance framework through which government and other stakeholders share responsibility for developing and delivering policy, planning and programs or services. However, the Government of Alberta (GoA) retains legislative accountability for implementing the strategy and for administering water and watershed management activities in the province.

The strategy identifies three types of partnerships, each focused at a different scale:

- The Alberta Water Council (AWC) works at a province-wide scale.
- Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) operate at a watershed scale.
- Watershed Stewardship Groups (WSGs) work at the local scale.

The underlying premise is that partners across the province are best positioned to anticipate and develop innovative responses to local and regional water issues as well as build awareness in their areas. The table below describes each of the partners and their role in the partnership, along with the expected outcomes. The common goal is information sharing, advice and collaboration.

Partner	Description and Role	Outcomes
Government of Alberta	Implements and administers the <i>Water for Life</i> (WFL) strategy. Through various ministries, it participates on the AWC and WPACs and provides regional staff to assist WSGs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely response to AWC recommendations • Review and approval of water management plans • Technical and administrative support for partnerships.
Alberta Water Council	Monitors implementation of the <i>WFL</i> strategy and champions its goals. It identifies projects and initiatives that would benefit from input or collaboration from WPACs and WSGs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely and strategic advice given to governments, industry and non-government organizations • Body of knowledge and expertise on specific water issues.
Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils	Multi-stakeholder councils that work with the GoA in basin planning and evaluation. May also highlight shared issues with AWC or local WSGs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining leadership in watershed assessment and planning • Advice and support for WSGs • Presentation of issues to the AWC.
Watershed Stewardship Groups	Grass-roots organizations that operate locally to take action to protect or enhance their watershed. They may also highlight issues for the GoA, AWC or WPACs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking community-level action to safeguard Alberta’s water resources • Input to WPAC activities • Submission of issues to AWC.

In addition to the AWC, the partnership system includes 11 regional WPACs and approximately 140 local WSGs. Membership in the AWC is drawn from four broad categories: Industry, Non-Government Organizations, Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities, and Government (which accounts for urban and rural municipalities, Métis Settlements General Council, First Nations and the Federal Government). Similarly, the WPACs and WSGs draw from this same range of stakeholders and also typically include members of the public. More than 1000 Albertans actively participate in WFL activities.

Good communication among the partners is important to their overall success. In 2011, the AWC examined shared strategic priorities and recommended ways to improve coordination and communication across and among the partnerships. Several recommendations focused on ways to involve partners in developing water policy by making them aware of opportunities and encouraging their participation, both by providing their ideas and by bringing new issues forward for further scrutiny.

For more information on WPACs, visit <http://albertawpacs.ca>. For more information on WSGs, visit <http://www.waterforlife.alberta.ca/01316.html>.

This fact sheet is one in a series prepared by the Alberta Water Council. Some information in this fact sheet, including the table, is drawn from the description of partnerships at the Water for Life website, www.waterforlife.alberta.ca/01157.html. All fact sheets and associated Council reports are available at www.awchome.ca.