

Non-Point Source Pollution Project Team Terms of Reference

Initial terms of reference approved by the Alberta Water Council on June 24, 2010. Timelines and Deliverables and Budget Amended June 16, 2011. Timelines and Deliverables October 25, 2012.

CONTEXT:

- The Alberta Water Council's Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Project Team was asked to recommend areas of work where either the Council or other organizations could most effectively advance the healthy aquatic ecosystems goal of the Water for Life strategy. The council's report *Recommended Projects to Advance the Goal of Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems (March 2009)* identified a number of priority areas for work, including two recommendations around improving the understanding and management of non-point source pollution.
- At the Council's 2010 Business Planning workshop, the board decided to undertake a project that would make recommendations to advance efforts in managing the impacts of non-point source pollution in Alberta.
- The project team 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.

STRATEGIC INTENT (GOAL):

- Provide recommendations on how to better manage the total non-point source contaminant loading in our watersheds to achieve *Water for Life* goals. This will be done by i) assessing our current "state of" non-point source pollution knowledge, ii) examining the policy, practices and regulatory tools that both can and/or have historically been employed to manage it, and, iii) with this knowledge, analysing gaps and opportunities that will advance our efforts in managing the impacts of non-point pollution and where appropriate reducing it. In order to best utilize resources the initial focus will be on surface water.

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a working definition of the term *non-point source pollution*
- Provide an understanding of the current "state of" knowledge on non-point source pollution and its management in Alberta
- Examine the tools that characterize and aid in the management of non-point source pollution
- Make recommendations that will allow better management of non-point source contaminant loadings in our watersheds

KEY TASKS:

- Provide regular updates to the Council.
- Build a work plan and operate according to its timelines and tasks.
- Prepare a working definition of non-point source pollution to facilitate a shared understanding of the definition and its intent by reviewing other working definitions and their application and/or intents and present that working definition to Council for adjustment/approval.
- Conduct an assessment of non-point source pollution data, knowledge, and tools to determine the current "state of" non-point source pollution management in Alberta. This will include:
 - An evaluation and quantification of the established linkages between land cover/land use, practices and water quality/quantity in general and specific to Alberta
 - An assessment of contributions from different major input sources of non-point pollution to surface water

- Identification and evaluation of data sources for non-point source contaminant information available in Alberta,
- identification and evaluation of non-point source pollution assessment tools, and then
- an evaluation of the state of knowledge and analyses of gaps.
- Assess the policy, practices and regulatory tools that are used to manage non-point source pollution, by conducting a review of:
 - existing public policies, practices and regulations in Alberta that are or could be applied to non-point sources of pollution
 - policies, practices and regulations in other jurisdictions to find innovative tools to manage non point source pollution
- Evaluate the state of implementation of policy, practices and regulatory tools for reducing or controlling non-point pollution with a focus on Alberta, and identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- Prepare a final report containing the following:
 - the approved working definition of the term “non-point source pollution,” including context for understanding the definition and its intent
 - an analysis of the current “state of” non-point source pollution in Alberta and associated data, knowledge, and tools for its management
 - an examination of policies, practices, regulations and their implementation in Alberta and other jurisdictions
 - recommendations that provide directional advice on how to better manage non-point source contaminant loadings in our watersheds which may include, but are not limited to, recommendations for monitoring programs, assessment of land use linkages to water quality, modelling tools, a suitable management and/or reduction framework, and directional advice with next steps

TIMELINES and DELIVERABLES:

- Prepare and present for approval a working definition for NPS Pollution.....Oct 2010
- Draft report recommendations Jun 2012
- Final report and recommendations Mar 2013

MEMBERSHIP:

Industry:

- Forestry
- Cropping
- Irrigation
- Livestock

Non-Governmental Organizations:

- Environmental NGO
- Fish Habitat Conservation
- Lake Environment Conservation
- Wetland Conservation
- Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils

Government:

- Large Urban
- Small Urban
- Rural

Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities:

- Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
- Alberta Transportation
- Energy Resources Conservation Board

BUDGET:

The Working Group estimates a total budget of \$150,000 to complete the project, broken down as follows:

Core Funding Costs (covered by Alberta Water Council):

Stakeholder support	\$ 55,000
Hosting	\$ 10,000
Communications support	\$ 5,000

Project Funding Costs (covered by stakeholders):

Report on current State of NPS pollution management data, knowledge and tools	\$40,000
Report on policy, practices and regulatory overview	\$ 40,000