

# **Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Project Team Terms of Reference**

Approved by the Alberta Water Council on June 17, 2008.

## CONTEXT:

- This group was established to define *healthy aquatic ecosystems* and explore potential opportunities to advance the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems (HAE) element of the *Water for Life* strategy. The identification of these opportunities is intended to provide a foundation and direction for future work under this element.
- The group is also intended to maintain the Council's focus on the HAE-related issues identified in the Council's report, *Water for Life: Recommendations for Renewal*, which noted the need to move from planning to action under this element.
- 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 a foundation and direction for future work under the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems element of the *Water for Life* strategy.

## OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop a working definition of the term *healthy aquatic ecosystems*
2. Recommend potential healthy aquatic ecosystems projects of provincial importance and identify which groups are most suited to lead them.
3. Identify potential HAE projects that may be undertaken within the AWC's mandate.

## KEY TASKS:

- Provide regular updates to the Council.
- Prepare a work plan that includes key tasks, deliverables, and timelines.

### Prepare a Definition:

- The project team will capitalize on existing Alberta Environment work towards a HAE definition and gather and review relevant information or materials that may supplement this work.
- In a one-day project team workshop, the team will develop a working definition of the term *healthy aquatic ecosystems* as it relates to the *Water for Life* strategy using the materials they gathered and reviewed prior to the meeting.
- The project team will provide context around its definition to facilitate an understanding of the recommended definition and its intent.
- The project team will present a draft definition of the term *healthy aquatic ecosystems* at the September Council board meeting.

Recommend Potential Projects:

- The project team will work with the *Water for Life* Implementation Review Committee to gather information about initiatives and needs related to the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems element of the *Water for Life* strategy.
- The team will develop a process for prioritizing potential projects in the area of HAE.
- In a two-day workshop, the project team will:
  - Develop a list of potential HAE projects based on the information gathered by the Review Committee, existing AWC reports, and the input of the Project Team.
  - Use the prioritization process developed by the team to recommend a set of HAE projects of provincial importance.
  - Use the prioritization process developed by the team to recommend up to five potential HAE projects for the Alberta Water Council to consider undertaking.
- The project team will prepare a final report containing the following:
  - A recommended working definition of the term *healthy aquatic ecosystems* including context for understanding the recommended definition and its intent.
  - A set of recommend potential healthy aquatic ecosystems projects of provincial importance and the groups which are most suited to lead them.
  - Up to five recommended potential HAE projects the Council could undertake, along with a brief rationale and context for each recommended project.
  - A brief description of the project team's prioritization process.
  - A list of other non-priority potential HAE projects that were identified by the team.

TIMELINES and DELIVERABLES:

- Update presentation ..... September 2008
  - Draft working definition
  - Draft project prioritization process
- Update presentation ..... December 2008
  - Draft project recommendations
- Final report and recommendations ..... March 2009

MEMBERSHIP:

- Industry:
  - Forestry
  - Irrigation
  - Power Generation
  - Livestock / Cropping
- Other Government:
  - Large Urban
  - Small Urban
  - Métis

- Non-Governmental Organizations
  - Environmental NGO
  - Fish Habitat Conservation
  - Lake Environment Conservation
  - Wetland Conservation
  - Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils
- Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities
  - Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
  - Alberta Environment

**BUDGET:**

- By coordinating information gathering with the W4L Implementation Review Committee, the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Project Team is not expected to require additional financial support.