



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Protecting Source Water in Alberta

Edmonton... A new guide by the Alberta Water Council (AWC) lays out the essentials for source water protection (SWP) planning. Source water is untreated, raw water from surface or groundwater sources used for drinking water or other purposes. Albertans' quality of life depends on a healthy, secure, and sustainable water supply. Population growth, development, and climate variability continue to stress our drinking water sources.

Source water protection is a voluntary, collaborative process that is part of an integrated approach to protect sources of drinking water, reduce public health risks, and minimize the costs of water treatment. "SWP is about managing risks and enhancing the resilience of our drinking water systems using a multi-barrier approach" according to Mike Christensen, Vice-President of the Alberta Lake Management Society.

"Governments, Indigenous communities, and watershed organizations are leading SWP efforts across the province," says Andre Asselin, Executive Director of the AWC. "However, we need a common approach and better integration of planning and risk management processes to protect source water for drinking water purposes, particularly in rural and small communities."

Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Environment and Parks adds "There is nothing more fundamental to life than access to a safe and secure water supply. Wherever you live across the province, we are working with our partners to ensure the water supply you rely on remains clean and abundant, today and in the future."

Research for the project noted the importance of leadership and the need for strong collaboration among drinking water providers, watershed groups, and others. The project results also indicated a lack of awareness, data, tools, training, resources, and expertise needed to address source water risks, particularly in rural and small municipalities.

Protecting Sources of Drinking Water in Alberta: Guide to Source Water Protection Planning provides advice, including six steps, on how to safeguard drinking water sources by developing a SWP plan. Each step describes key factors for success along with related case studies, tools and resources available to support SWP in Alberta. The guide is intended to support municipalities, Indigenous communities, drinking water providers, or others interested in undertaking this voluntary, collaborative process. A companion document *Protecting Sources of Drinking Water in Alberta* summarizes the key findings of the project and should be used together with the guide when developing a SWP plan. A supporting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eiBK9lyKEVM> video on how to use the guide is also available.

Visit <https://www.awchome.ca/projects/protecting-sources-drinking-water-alberta-2/> to access the report and supporting materials. Follow us on twitter [@ABWaterCouncil](https://twitter.com/ABWaterCouncil) and like us on [Facebook!](https://www.facebook.com/ABWaterCouncil)

The [Alberta Water Council](https://www.awc-casa.ca) is a multi-stakeholder partnership that stewards the implementation of Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy and provides advice on water management issues to its members, which include the Government of Alberta and provincial authorities, industries, municipalities and NGOs.

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