

ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

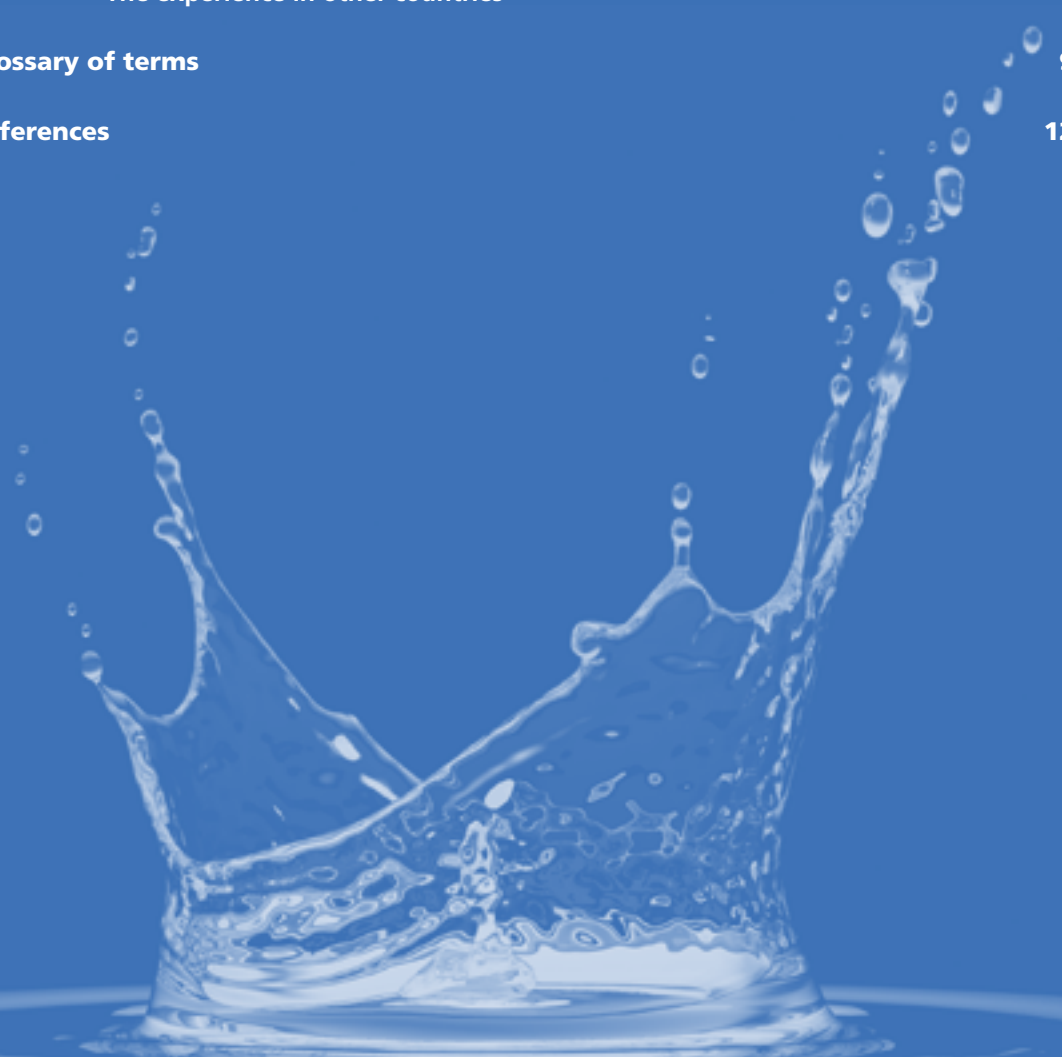
**Shared Governance Model and
Watershed Management Planning Framework**

**Companion to the
WORKSHOP DISCUSSION GUIDE**



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Engagement process

The Alberta Water Council has appointed a Project Team to develop a shared governance model and watershed management planning framework to assist *Water for Life* partners in the execution of their duties.

This document has been prepared as a *Companion* to the *Workshop Discussion Guide*, which will frame the engagement process at four invited workshops conducted by the Project Team.

- Edmonton, Tuesday, November 20.
- Slave Lake, Thursday, November 22.
- Lethbridge, Monday, November 26.
- Calgary, Tuesday, November 27.

The *Discussion Guide* was prepared following consultations with key Watershed Planning and Advisory Council members in July and August in which they were asked to help identify the key issues facing WPACs and their partners with respect to shared governance and watershed management planning.

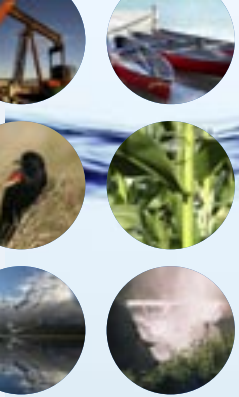
The *Discussion Guide* provides information to enhance understanding among partners about the concepts that underlie the project and will help the Project Team to gather ideas and suggestions on key content to support the development of the shared governance model and the watershed management planning framework. This Companion piece provides additional background information for those less familiar with Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy and who would like more detailed information about the strategy, shared governance and watershed management planning.

The Project Team will prepare a summary report based on information collected through the workshop engagement sessions and independent submissions. The Project Team is also gathering information on various shared governance models and watershed management planning methods from other jurisdictions through an international literature review to see what can be learned and applied in Alberta.

Using your input and assessing examples from other jurisdictions, the Project Team will prepare two draft documents – a shared governance model and a watershed management planning framework – by December 2007. The drafts will then be made available for further review and discussion.

A Shared Governance-Watershed Management Planning Forum is planned for early 2008 to support final review of the model and framework documents by WPACs prior to their adoption by the Alberta Water Council in 2008.

Torque Communications, an Edmonton-based communications and public relations consulting firm, is providing support to the Project Team for this project.



Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy

Adopted in 2003 and recognized internationally, Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy is an ambitious and complex commitment that relies upon the engagement of Albertans across the province. *Water for Life* outlines a new approach to water management in Alberta, shifting to a shared responsibility or stewardship approach, to achieve three major outcomes.

1. **Safe, secure drinking water supply.**
2. **Healthy aquatic ecosystems.**
3. **Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.**

To achieve these outcomes, the strategy emphasizes actions in three key areas:

- knowledge and research;
- partnerships for watershed management and stewardship; and
- water conservation.

Water for Life provides the strategic direction to make sure watershed management in Alberta meets emerging challenges, such as unprecedented population growth, rapid economic development and climate change. However, *Water for Life* also recognizes that protecting water has to go beyond the traditional approach of 'direct management' of water as a natural resource. Watershed management must also address land use practices, economic development policy, and the coordination of shareholder involvement – including industry and other orders of government. At its foundation, *Water for Life* asserts that some of the most effective solutions to emerging challenges can be defined by those immediately affected by those challenges 'on-the-ground' as they arise in their communities. Accordingly, citizen and shareholder engagement is a core water management function.

Thirteen ministries and boards of the provincial government have legislated responsibilities with a potential impact on the success of *Water for Life*. Other shareholders that share responsibility with the provincial government to achieve *Water for Life* goals include:

- the *Water for Life* partnerships – Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, Watershed Stewardship Groups;
- municipal governments and federal government departments;
- industry;
- environmental non-governmental organizations;
- First Nations and Métis Settlements.

All these shareholders must be involved to realize the strategic goals of *Water for Life* and they must also have the capacity, focus and willingness to contribute.

See page 12 of this workbook for online references to the *Water for Life* strategy and associated documents.

Shared governance – how do we work together to achieve *Water for Life* goals?

“Governance” is not synonymous with “government.” This confusion of terms can have unfortunate consequences. A public policy issue where the heart of the matter is a problem of *governance* too often becomes defined implicitly as a problem of *government*, with the further assumption that it is government’s responsibility to ‘fix’ whatever the problem might be. That idea, however, contradicts the government’s commitment to inclusive partnerships and watershed management that involves shareholders from a wide range of interests. Watershed management is a *shared* responsibility.

If governance is not about government, what is it about? Partly, it is about how governments and other organizations interact, how they relate to citizens, and how decisions are made in a complex environment. In the context of *Water for Life*, governance is concerns how all the shareholders can work together collaboratively in defined partnerships to achieve the *Water for Life* goals listed above.

In the Alberta Water Council’s 2005 *Review of Implementation Progress*, “governance and management for long-term strategy implementation” emerged as a clear theme on which the overall success of the *Water for Life* strategy depends.

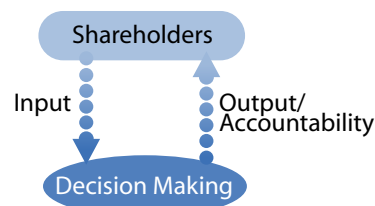
The Council believes *Water for Life* runs the risk of becoming inconsistently applied and fragmented without an overall unifying direction and vision. A shared governance model that describes roles, responsibilities, relationships and accountabilities for the Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, Watershed Stewardship Groups and their sectoral representation – government, industry, environmental organizations, other groups and individuals – will contribute significantly to defining the vision.

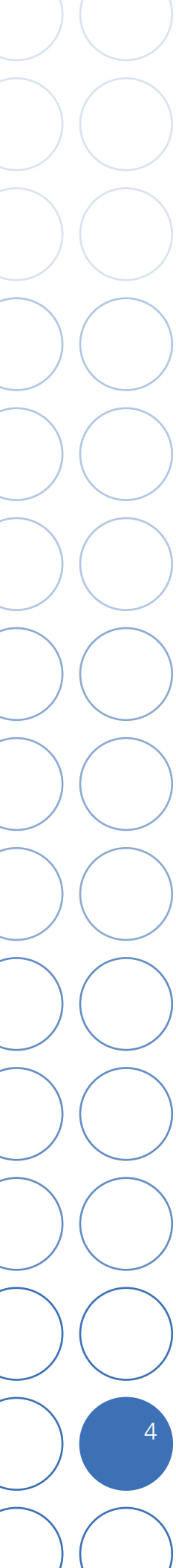
The Shared Governance Model and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team has defined “shared governance” as follows.

Shared governance refers to a governance structure where the provincial government and external parties – including other orders of government, Aboriginal institutions, industry, and non-government agencies – share responsibility to develop policy and deliver planning, programs or services, but where government retains legislative accountability. Shared governance is a collaborative goal setting and problem-solving process built on trust and communication and requires a clear accountability framework with clear roles, responsibilities and relationships. Government involvement varies with the level of control that is desired and/or the capacity of the external parties to carry out specified functions

In other words, the shared governance model will define the “accountability framework” for the three levels of *Water for Life* partnerships.

FIGURE 1: SHAREHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING





The central component of governance is decision-making, which is the process by which a group makes decisions to direct its collective efforts. Watershed governance is complicated by the fact that it involves several shareholders with intersecting interests in a multi-jurisdictional environment, not a single decision-maker. Each of the partner members of any one of the partnerships listed above influences how decisions are made, who the decision-makers are, and what decisions are taken. All partners must absorb the input of their colleagues into the decision-making process. Partners are then accountable to one another for the partnership's decisions and their implementation.

It should also be emphasized that governance is about the strategic aspects of steering the group, making the 'larger decisions' about both direction and roles. Tactical decisions should be guided by strategic decisions and may be undertaken by administrative staff.

Implementing shared governance requires that its elements – including delegated authority, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, accountability, and protection of the broad public interest – must be taken into consideration throughout the watershed management planning, implementation and renewal processes.

The findings of the Rosenberg International Forum on Water Policy, which was asked by the Alberta Water Council to review the existing arrangements for governing and managing water in Alberta and to make recommendations about how those arrangements could be strengthened and improved, reinforces this view. The Rosenberg report acknowledges that the shared governance envisioned in *Water for Life* represents a considerable advance over traditional governance arrangements for water resources but also emphasized the importance of shareholder validation and access to sufficient resources.

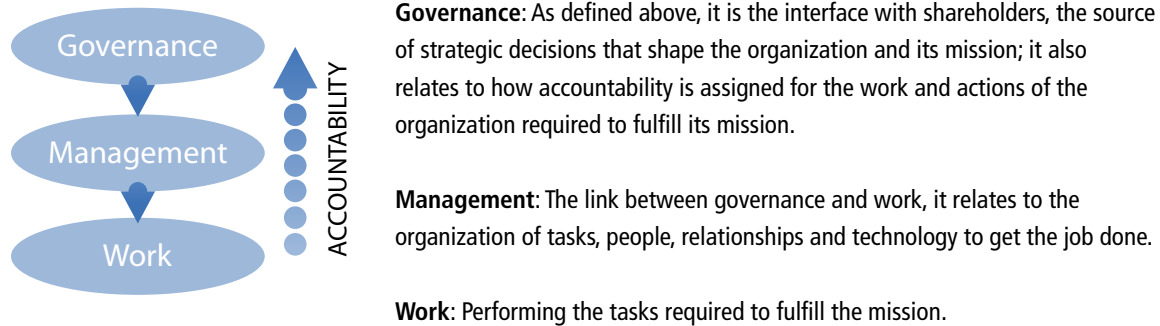
The willingness of shareholders to participate in collaborative arrangements will endure only if participants believe they are being listened to and that their recommendations are being acted upon. Unless broad engagement and participation occurs, inclusive governance may devolve into rule by narrow, private interests. It may be necessary to provide support to some non-government organizations that otherwise lack the necessary resources to participate (8).

The 2005 *Review* also reported that the Alberta government needs to provide sustainable resource support to WPACs and, to some degree, WSGs. The Alberta Water Council commented that partnerships represent a significant change in policy development and implementation. Success will depend on government providing a suitable level of organizational support and sustainable funding and shareholders sustaining their commitment to *Water for Life*. The Alberta government, too, is a partner in the shared governance model and it is important for it to be aware of functional disparities between the simple organizational presence of partnerships and their ability to implement the *Water for Life* strategy. Clearly, governance arrangements will involve continual capacity-building, relationship renewal, and the on-going provision of government resources to ensure that *Water for Life* partners are able to deliver on governance commitments.

THE FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNANCE

There are three distinct functions that are necessary for any organization to fulfill its mission: governance, management and work. These functions are the same for *Water for Life* partners.

FIGURE 2: ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONS AS RELATED TO GOVERNANCE



It is relatively simple, in theory, to separate these functions from one another. However, in practice, the divisions between them can become blurred, disappear altogether or, more dangerously, become confused – which leads to unnecessary duplication of effort or the failure to complete a task entirely. This is often more difficult for organizations where governance is provided by a volunteer board but whose functional responsibilities often encompass management and work as well. The danger is not necessarily in the mixing of these functions but in a lack of clarity about responsibilities and lost lines of accountability, both within the organization and between organizations with shared responsibilities. Good governance ensures that these authorities, roles and responsibilities, and accountabilities remain clear and support organizational effectiveness.

For more specific information about the Alberta Water Council, WPACs and WSGs, visit www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/awc/. Look for “Partners” in the left-hand navigation menu.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE

Water for Life articulates additional considerations that might inform or serve as guiding principles to help develop the shared governance model.

- Albertans must recognize there are limits to the available water supply.
- Alberta’s water must be managed within the physical limitations and supply available to individual watersheds.
- Safe, secure drinking water supply, healthy aquatic ecosystems and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy are overarching management objectives. These objectives will be achieved through knowledge and research, partnerships and conservation.
- All partners must encourage inclusiveness and broad shareholder representation at the local, watershed and provincial levels, as appropriate.
- Partners must have a shared understanding of the watershed approach and use consensus decision-making in their efforts to adopt it.
- Where they choose to work together, the roles and responsibilities of the Government of Alberta and its partners will be identified. In all its partnerships, the provincial government will uphold its legislated responsibility, accountability and legal authority for water and land use management decisions.

- Watershed management planning must take place within municipal, provincial and federal water and land use planning and decision-making processes and under the *Municipal Government Act, Water Act, Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, Agricultural Operation Practices Act, Public Lands Act, Forests Act*, federal *Fisheries Act* and *Navigable Waters Protection Act* and other relevant policies and legislation.
- Where they choose to work together, the Government of Alberta and its partners will identify mechanisms to measure the achievement of goals and objectives that will be established in each partnership. Recommendations should lead to actions, actions should have measurable results, and results should lead to improved watershed management.

Competing uses for water

A watershed is a complex ecosystem: soil, vegetation, animals, humans, water and climate are all integral and interacting elements. Watershed management planning becomes complex because there are multiple values, perspectives and visions that may compete with one another for water use. Water extraction, land use changes, urban development, and industrial, forestry and agricultural operations all have an impact on the watershed. The cumulative impacts of human activity can affect water quantity and timing of surface flows, as well as water quality, groundwater recharge, and floodplain maintenance.

Alberta's landscape is increasingly busy. During the past five years, seven of Canada's fifteen fastest growing communities have been in Alberta.¹ Analysts expect the province will defy the traditional 'boom and bust' cycle, led by oil sands development, which will fuel development in other sectors across the province. Conventional oil and gas, forestry, mining, tourism, and agriculture industries also compete for access to both land and water. With these mounting pressures, the time is right to discuss new, more effective approaches to water management and the integration of water management with air and land management processes. It is equally important to involve all shareholders in this discussion to ensure that appropriate use of water is prioritized and consistent with the goals of *Water for Life*.

The Alberta government is currently engaging Albertans in discussions that will lead to the development of a new Land Use Framework. Government is also developing a regulatory framework to address the cumulative effects of development. It is essential that all these initiatives are well aligned and complementary. And all of these initiatives are in some way related to watershed and ecosystem health, and the supply of water for various uses. A management approach that recognizes and integrates these competing uses is essential to protect the province's water – and other natural – resources.

The watershed is a logical starting point to address water pollution and competing uses. However, the jurisdiction of the planning body should match the geographic scope of the problem being addressed. Existing political boundaries have no ecological foundation, and political processes are biased toward the short-term. Natural resources like water require long-term planning that brings relevant groups together to work collaboratively – provided sufficient management authority is devolved to them – to develop and implement comprehensive watershed management plans.

The watershed management planning framework will support the work of WPACs and WSGs to improve the management of watersheds across Alberta. Following a common approach, using a common methodology, integrating jointly held strategic objectives as defined in *Water for Life*, and identifying other opportunities to coordinate efforts and share best practices will advance watershed management across the province.

RECOGNIZED CHALLENGES

The Alberta Water Council also recognizes that there are ongoing challenges related to governance and watershed management planning.

- Short-term budgets for watershed management plans were very aggressive and are being redefined. A grant program for WSGs has been established; it is administered by the Alberta Stewardship Network with funds provided by the Alberta government. However funding and resources remain an issue.
- Experiences from the development and approval of the South Saskatchewan River Basin Water Management Plan underscored the challenges of future watershed planning in the province. Its restrictions demonstrate how critical the information needs and role of the WPACS will be in the process.
- Partnerships represent a significant change in policy development and implementation.
- With good involvement during the project, the challenge is implementing recommendations made in the documents, because it involves a change in behaviour of those involved in governance and watershed planning
- Need good linkage on both content and engagement timing with other Alberta Water Council project initiatives, e.g., Renewal, Wetlands Policy as well as other key Alberta government lead engagement initiatives, e.g., Land Use Framework, Cumulative Effects Assessment.
- Volunteer commitment will depend upon the ongoing capacity of the councils to lead planning. There is a need for the Government of Alberta to provide sustainable support for the resources the WPACs and WSGs require. A model for sustained funding needs to be defined.
- Sharing information among WPACs and WSGs with respect to conservation science, best practices, consultation techniques, etc., could lead to significant cost efficiencies.
- It will be important to provide sufficient information to facilitate performance assessments of the governments by the public.
- The capacity to undertake regular and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation, including long term monitoring of key ecological and cultural values, and to respond to findings must be built in partnership with government.
- Risk management methodologies need to be developed and shared.

THE EXPERIENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

The shift to managing water resources within the context of a watershed is a global movement. So, too, is the shift to distributed decision-making authority, or shared governance. Though there will be a detailed international literature review undertaken as part of this project, some similar international initiatives are referenced here to provide a flavour for the kind of transitions with respect to water management that are happening around the world.

Water management in Australia, which is entering periods of chronic water shortage, is a subject of escalating importance. Adopted in 2004, the National Water Initiative² encompasses a wide range of water management issues and encourages the adoption of best practice approaches to the management of water in Australia. In particular, the initiative is expected to result in:

- expansion of permanent trade in water to promote more profitable uses of water and more cost-effective and flexible recovery of water to achieve environmental outcomes;
- improved water industry investor confidence due to more secure water access entitlements, better and more compatible registry arrangements, better monitoring, reporting and accounting of water use, and improved public access to information;
- more sophisticated, transparent and comprehensive water planning that deals with key issues such as the major interception of water, the interaction between surface and groundwater systems, and the provision of water to meet specific environmental outcomes;

² National Water Initiative. Australian Government, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. www.pmc.gov.au/water_reform/nwi.cfm.

- a commitment to addressing over-allocated systems as quickly as possible in consultation with affected shareholders; and
- better and more efficient management of water in urban environments, for example through the increased use of recycled water and stormwater.

South Africa has also adopted a system of decentralized management of its water resources in its quest to more equitably allocate a scarce resource. The responsibility and authority for water resources management has been devolved to catchment management agencies and, at a local level, water user associations. Sharing responsibility is expected to enable the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to move from its present multiple roles as operator, developer and regulator to become the sector leader, policy maker, regulator and monitor.³

One element of the California Water Plan is watershed management, which it describes as follows.

*Watershed management is the process of evaluating, planning, managing, restoring, and organizing land and other resource use [emphasis added] within an area of land that has a single common drainage point. Watershed management tries to provide sustainable human benefits, while maintaining a sustainable ecosystem. Watershed management assumes that a prerequisite for any project is the sustained ability for the watershed to maintain the functions and processes that support the native ecology of the watershed [which] implies an integration of human needs and ecological condition that allows the watershed to sustain ecological integrity over time while providing for sustainable community needs (25-1).*⁴

In California land and water management and innovation go hand-in-hand. Conservation planning, increasing water efficiency and improving water reuse and recycling are fundamental aspects of water management.

In the European Union, integration at the watershed level is an important part of a 'nested' planning approach promoted through the EU Water Framework Directive, which was adopted in 2000.⁵ Initiatives taken forward by the states concerned for the Maas, Schelde and Rhine river basins have served as positive examples of this approach, with their cooperation and joint objective-setting across member state borders, or, in the case of the Rhine, even beyond the EU territory. In this case, shared governance has acquired an international flavour. However, implementation of the watershed/river basin management approach is not yet universal and the EU is working to help member states implement the approach.

Similar efforts to integrate water resource management at the watershed level, which necessitates an exploration of how best to share governance with local authorities, are occurring across the globe as governments recognize the need to shift away from centrally-driven efforts toward more collaborative watershed-based approaches.

In addition to the engagement process supported by this discussion guide, the Shared Governance Model and Watershed Management Planning Framework Project Team is also supervising an international literature review to see what Alberta might learn from other jurisdictions that will advance its own efforts to implement shared governance and watershed management planning.

³ National Water Resource Strategy. Government of South Africa, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. <<http://www.dwaf.gov.za/Documents/Policies/NWRS/Default.htm>>.

⁴ California Water Plan Update 2005. State of California, Department of Water Resources. <<http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/strategies/index.cfm>>.

⁵ The European Union Water Framework Directive. <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html>.



Glossary of terms

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability involves either the expectation or assumption of account-giving behaviour. In a leadership role, accountability is the acknowledgement and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies including the administration, governance and implementation within the scope of the role or position, and encompassing the obligation to report, explain and be answerable for resulting consequences. As an aspect of governance, it is central to discussions related to problems in both the public and private sectors where governance is the accountability for consistent, cohesive policies, processes and decision rights. In general governmental institutions as well as the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to those who will be affected by their decisions or actions.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The ability to provide for policy learning and adjustment of management actions on the basis of experience.

AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM

An aquatic area where living and non-living elements of the environment interact. This includes the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of rivers, lakes and wetlands and the plants and animals associated with them.

APPROVAL PROCESS

The approval process consists of five stages: (1) filing of an application, (2) notice requirements for a complete application, (3) review of an application, (4) decision to issue or refuse to issue approval, and (5) provisions for appeal (for more detailed information about the approval process, see www3.gov.ab.ca/env/protenf/approvals/factsheets/approv.html).

AUTHORITY

A person or organization having power or control in a particular, especially political or administrative, sphere.

CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING

A decision-making process that not only seeks the agreement of most participants but also to resolve or mitigate the objections of the minority to achieve the most agreeable decision. A healthy consensus decision-making process usually encourages and addresses dissent early, maximizing the chance of accommodating the views of all minorities. Since unanimity may be difficult to achieve, especially in large groups, consensus decision-making bodies may use an alternative benchmark of consensus that includes acknowledgement of dissenting views.

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement is those activities that compel and/or force adherence to legal requirements.

IN-STREAM NEEDS AND IN-STREAM FLOW NEEDS

The amount (flow or lake level) and quality of water *scientifically determined* to be needed to protect a natural water body or aquatic environment; tourism, recreational, transportation or waste assimilation uses of water; or the management of fish or wildlife.

PARTNER

An individual or organization that shares the costs, risks, benefits, power and/or resources necessary to achieve a common objective.

PARTNERSHIP (WATERSHED PLANNING AND ADVISORY COUNCILS)

A voluntary organization of provincial, watershed, community and/or individual shareholders who agree to undertake common or complementary activities, enter into agreements, and work together for the orderly, efficient and accountable achievement of results. While these partnerships do not have regulatory authority, they can make recommendations to improve watershed management to those bodies that do have that authority.

POLICY

A governing set of principles given force and effect by elected officials in order to meet recognized public needs. Policy is made in the name of 'the public' and is interpreted and implemented by both public and private actors. The authority to set policy is what distinguishes government from the private sector and it is fundamental to the work of government. In general, policies are broad, conceptual documents that outline the approach and/or considerations to be taken into account by decision-makers. Policy is used to cause, facilitate and/or promote desired outcomes and prevent adverse events from happening. Policy also can refer to a consistent course of action that may be based on constitutional authority, legislation/regulation, budgets, procedures or "habits." In the latter case, the consistent course of action is 'unwritten' but is still policy.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility is a duty, obligation or liability that an entity, whether it is government, a corporation, organization or individual, is expected to carry forward to a successful conclusion. With responsibility goes the authority to direct and action necessary to ensure success.

RIPARIAN LAND

Any land that adjoins or directly influences a water body – and includes floodplains and areas that would be affected by a 1-in-100 year flood, and land that affects alluvial aquifers. These areas support plants and animals, and protect aquatic ecosystems by filtering out sediments, contaminants and excess nutrients from upland areas, and build and maintain banks and shorelines. They are part of the extensive drainage/natural storage network within every watershed

ROLE

The part played or assumed by a person in society, life, etc., influenced by his or her conception of what is appropriate.

SHARED GOVERNANCE

Shared governance refers to a governance structure where both government and external parties share responsibility for policy development and delivery of planning, programs or services, but where government retains *legislative* accountability. Shared governance is a collaborative goal setting and problem-solving process built on trust and communication. The extent of government involvement varies with the level of control that is desired and/or the capacity of the external parties to carry out the functions. Shared governance requires a clear accountability framework with clear roles, responsibilities and relationships. Government involvement varies with the level of control that is desired and/or the capacity of the external parties to carry out specified functions

SHAREHOLDER

A shareholder is an individual, organization or government with an interest in or engaged in resource and environmental management in Alberta. Involvement can be targeted to specific shareholders or segments of the public or can be more general.

WATER BODY

Any location where water flows or is present, whether or not the flow of the presence of water is continuous, intermittent or occurs only during a flood. This includes, but is not limited to, wetlands and aquifers.

WATER CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Under the *Water Act*, the amount and quality of water *set by a Director* to protect a natural water body or its aquatic environment; tourism, recreational, transportation or waste assimilation uses of water; or the management of fish or wildlife.

WATER LICENSING

A water licence provides the authority to divert and use surface water or groundwater. The licence identifies the water source, the location of the diversion site, an amount of water to be diverted and used from that source, the priority of the “water right” established by the licence, and the conditions under which the diversion and use must take place.

WATER WITHDRAWAL LICENSING PROCESS

Under the *Water Act*, a system for managing water used for human and industrial consumption while protecting the water body.

WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Alberta’s *Framework for Water Management Planning* outlines the process for water management planning and the components required for water management plans in the province. The process applies to all water bodies, including streams, rivers, lakes, aquifers, and wetlands. A water management plan may be considered by a Director when making licence and approval decisions.

APPROVED WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Under the *Water Act*, a plan that must be considered by a Director when making licence and approval decisions. An approved plan must be in place before water allocation transfer applications and water holdbacks are approved.

WATERSHED

An area of land that catches precipitation and drains it to a common point such as a marsh, lake, stream or river and recharges groundwater. A watershed can be made up of several sub-watersheds that contribute to the overall drainage of the watershed.



WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

A comprehensive document that provides assessment and management information for a geographically defined watershed, including the analysis, actions, participants, and resources related to development and implementation of the plan. It may or may not include a water management plan. Watershed management plans should address water quality, point and non-point source pollution, source water protection, storm water and wastewater management, subsurface water supplies and a variety of land use activities as they impact water. They will have implications for downstream users and Alberta's legislated trans-boundary requirements. A watershed management plan recognizes and addresses the integration of land use and watershed management outcomes at the watershed scale.

WETLAND

Land having water at, near, or above the land surface or which is saturated with water long enough to promote wetland or aquatic processes as indicated by poorly drained (hydric) soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and various kinds of biological activity that are adapted to the wet environment. Degraded wetlands may not show all of these characteristics but remain important.



References

The following documents are available online to persons who wish to do additional research into the Water for Life strategy, shared governance and watershed management planning.

Several relevant documents are available from the *Water for Life* homepage at www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca, including the following.

- *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability.*
- *Enabling Partnerships: A Framework in Support of Water for Life.*
- *Report on Implementation Progress of Water for Life 2004-2005.*
- *Report of the Rosenberg International Forum on Water Policy to the Ministry of Environment, Province of Alberta.*

Other relevant documents published by the Alberta Water Council available online include the following.

- Alberta Water Council *Annual Report 2005-2006*. Available at www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/awc
- *Water for Life: Facts and information about Water in Alberta 2002*. Available at www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/html/information

Online documents relevant to this initiative published by Alberta Environment are available at www3.gov.ab.ca/env/water/management and include the following.

- Alberta Water Management and Erosion Control Program.
- Athabasca River Water Management Framework.
- Battle River Basin Water Management Plan.
- Cold Lake Beaver River Basin Water Management Plan.
- *Framework for Water Management Planning.*
- Lesser Slave Basins Water Management Plan – Phase One.
- South Saskatchewan River Basin Water Management Plan.
- Water Conservation Objectives.

For more information about consensus decision-making, consult the following online documents.

- The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment has electronically published excellent information about consensus decision-making, including "Strengthening Consensus" at www.ccme.ca/about/consensus.html
- "Defining Consensus," Alberta Water Council. Available at www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/awc/sharedgov/index.html

For a modest sample of international approaches water/watershed management, many of which embrace the concept of decentralized decision-making or 'shared governance,' visit the websites listed below.

- National Water Initiative. Australian Government, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. www.pmc.gov.au/water_reform/nwi.cfm
- National Water Resource Strategy. Government of South Africa, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. www.dwaf.gov.za/Documents/Policies/NWRS/Default.htm
- California Water Plan Update 2005. State of California, Department of Water Resources. www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/strategies
- The EU Water Framework Directive. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html



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