

## Measuring results to outcomes key next step for *Water for Life*

December 20, 2012

Edmonton .... As the provincial water strategy, *Water for Life*, marks its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013, the key to its continued success is to better measure and relate the results of the many activities underway through the strategy to its three goals of safe, secure drinking water; healthy aquatic ecosystems; and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

Establishing more formal evaluation and monitoring is one of the core recommendations in the *Review of Implementation Progress of Water for Life 2009-2011*, released by the Alberta Water Council on December 20<sup>th</sup>. In making the recommendation, the Council states, the ability to quantify the success of the various activities will help Albertans better understand the impact of *Water for Life*, and in general, the importance of specific water practices in Alberta today and into the future.

“As with previous reviews, in the 2009-2011 review we found significant progress continues to be made in a number of areas around water management practices and conservation across the province, but the momentum of activity generated over the past 10 years needs to be maintained,” said Gord Edwards, Executive Director of the Alberta Water Council. “The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Water for Life* provides an excellent opportunity for both the Government of Alberta and all key stakeholders to re-affirm the commitment to the three goals of the strategy, and more importantly, to set more specific measures to build on that success.”

In addition to better measuring results, other key recommendations in the 2009-2011 review include:

- The Government of Alberta conduct a transparent, broad-based public consultation on water allocation to ensure current and future water demand and supply are understood in each basin, and in relation to environmental and socio-economic objectives.
- The Government of Alberta and stakeholders complete outstanding actions around the goal of healthy aquatic ecosystems, including the wetlands policy, protection of critical aquatic ecosystems, and setting specific water conservation objectives for each basin.
- The Government of Alberta and its *Water for Life* partners work with research and academic institutions and other education and outreach providers to revisit the current knowledge and research direction, and to develop a plan to improve public and sector understanding of the value of water.
- The Government of Alberta investigate the use of additional economic instruments, applied in an equitable manner, to encourage water conservation, efficiency and productivity.
- Water-using sectors which have developed conservation, efficiency and productivity plans as part of the *Water for Life* Strategy need to both promote the plans to members of their respective sectors, and encourage those members to develop specific and measurable action plans to support the sector plan.

- All *Water for Life* partners need to continue to work with the Government of Alberta on watershed assessment and planning to ensure it is integrated with the provincial cumulative effects management system at the regional, municipal, resource and other land-use planning initiatives.

One of the primary roles of the Alberta Water Council – an independent, consensus-based group made up of stakeholders from all key sectors involved in water management and use in Alberta – is to regularly review the implementation progress and effectiveness of the *Water for Life* strategy. The 2009-2011 report is the fourth review conducted by the Council. Copies of the report and more information on the Alberta Water Council can be found at [www.awchome.ca](http://www.awchome.ca)

*Established in 2004, The Alberta Water Council is a multi-stakeholder partnership with 24 members from government, industry and non-governmental organizations. Its primary task is to monitor and steward implementation of Alberta Water for Life strategy and to champion the achievements of the strategy's three outcomes of a safe, secure drinking water supply, healthy aquatic ecosystems, and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.*

-30-

**For more information, please contact:**

Gord Edwards  
Executive Director, Alberta Water Council  
(780) 644-7373  
[g.edwards@awchome.ca](mailto:g.edwards@awchome.ca)