

**ALBERTA  
WATER COUNCIL**

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

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## ABOUT THE ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL

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THE ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL IS A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP THAT PROVIDES LEADERSHIP, EXPERTISE AND ADVOCACY, TO ENGAGE AND EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES AND GOVERNMENTS TO ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES OF THE *WATER FOR LIFE* STRATEGY.

Its Members represent governments, industry, and non-government organizations, all of whom have a vested interest in water. The Council's vision is that all Albertans are water stewards, working together to ensure safe, healthy and abundant water for a high quality of life for future generations.

Created in 2004 under Ministerial Order by Alberta's Minister of Environment, the Council serves as a unique example of the concept of shared governance. It is one of three types of partnerships established under the *Water for Life* strategy; the others are Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, and Watershed Stewardship Groups.

The Council regularly reviews implementation progress of the *Water for Life* strategy and champions achievement of the strategy's goals. The structure of the *Water for Life* strategy is based on a strong relationship between three goals:

- Safe, secure drinking water supply
- Healthy aquatic ecosystems
- Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy

and three key directions in water management practices that are intended to achieve these outcomes:

- Knowledge and research
- Partnerships
- Water conservation.

The Council also advises the Alberta Government, stakeholders and the public on effective water management practices and solutions to water issues, as well as on priorities for water research. Where there is consensus, the Council may advise on government policy and legislation. However, the Government of Alberta remains accountable for the implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy, and continues to administer water and watershed management activities throughout the province.

The Council operates by consensus and is guided by an executive committee. It submits reports and recommendations directly to the Minister of Environment and other stakeholders. In November 2007, the Council was formally incorporated as a not-for-profit society under Alberta's *Societies Act*, with its own bylaws and governance structure. The Council receives an annual grant from the Government of Alberta to cover core operating costs and is responsible for its own financial management.

### ABOUT THIS REPORT

This is the Council's fourth annual report. It summarizes activities for the calendar year 2008.





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## CONTENTS

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Executive Summary. . . . .	1
Message from the President . . . . .	2
Board Members. . . . .	3
Message from the Executive Director. . . . .	5
Project Team, Working Group and Committee Members . . . . .	7
Council Activities and Progress in 2008. . . . .	8
Committees, Working Groups and Project Teams . . . . .	10
In-Kind Contributions. . . . .	16
Auditor's Report. . . . .	17
Summarized Financial Statements — Alberta Water Council Association. . . . .	18
Organizations. . . . .	20
Other Resources . . . . .	21

“ IF THERE IS MAGIC ON  
THIS PLANET, IT IS  
CONTAINED IN WATER. ”

Loren Eiseley





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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THIS ANNUAL REPORT DESCRIBES THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL IN 2008 — THE BUSIEST YEAR SO FAR. SEVEN FINAL REPORTS CONTAINING MORE THAN 150 RECOMMENDATIONS WERE APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION AND TRANSMITTAL TO THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS:

- Council transmitted its report, *Water for Life: Recommendations for Renewal* to Minister Renner in January. The recommendations guided the government's renewal process, and in November the Council was pleased to join the Minister in announcing the renewal of the strategy.
- In response to another request from the Minister, Council approved *Intra-Basin Water Movement: Major Principles and Recommendations* at its June meeting.
- *Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Planning* provides detailed guidance to seven major water-using sectors in Alberta for developing their own voluntary conservation, efficiency and productivity plans, and was accepted by the board in September.
- The September board meeting also saw the approval of *Strengthening Partnerships: A Shared Governance Framework for Water for Life Collaborative Partnerships*.
- Concluding several years of work, the Wetland Policy Project Team submitted its two reports to the board in September: *Recommendations for a New Alberta Wetland Policy*, and *Recommendations for an Alberta Wetland Policy Implementation Plan*.
- In December, the board approved *Recommendations for a Watershed Management Planning Framework for Alberta*, a document that is intended to guide the creation of watershed management plans.
- The Water Allocation Transfer System Upgrade Project Team aims to develop recommendations to better utilize and enhance Alberta's water allocation transfer system to help meet *Water for Life* goals. As part of its information-gathering process, the team is hosting an international symposium in early 2009.
- The Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Project Team is examining how the Council can advance this goal of the *Water for Life* strategy. "Healthy aquatic ecosystems" was found to be lagging in implementation and the Council recommended it as a key focus in the renewal.
- An important recommendation in *Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Planning* was that the Council form a new team to assist sectors and to monitor and review progress in implementing sector plans. A working group was formed to draft terms of reference for the team, which will be established in early 2009.

Business planning and communications activities remained a high priority during the year too. Council approved an annual operational plan, participated in two news conferences and did two additional media releases to launch new reports.

This was the Council's first year as a not-for-profit association, which meant a new office and several new staff, as well as implementing some new systems and protocols. For more information on the Alberta Water Council, its publications and activities, please visit the Council's website at [www.awchome.ca](http://www.awchome.ca).

At the same it was wrapping up work in these key areas, the Council was also looking forward and establishing teams to work in the following areas:

- An Implementation Review Committee was formed to oversee the third review of implementation progress of the *Water for Life* strategy. This review is an important part of the Council's mandate, and is expected to be completed in the first half of 2009.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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AROUND THE WORLD, WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY ARE EMERGING AS TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING HUMANITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY. ALBERTA IS NO DIFFERENT. SIMPLY PUT, WE MUST HAVE WATER FOR LIFE.

Our province's rapid economic and population growth in the last few years has underscored the need for clean water and for its prudent management. Sometimes it has been easy to take water for granted, but the reality is that supplies are limited and we are feeling those pressures in southern Alberta now.

Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy identified the priorities back in 2003 and this document continues to guide the province as it strives to achieve the strategy's three goals. The strategy emphasizes the need for partnerships, thereby acknowledging the important stewardship role that all of us must play when it comes to this most valuable resource. The Water Council is one of those partnerships. It has been a forum for dialogue, where stakeholders can share their knowledge and experience, with the goal of providing their best advice to government on a range of water issues.

This annual report reflects the breadth of the Council's work in 2008, on topics ranging from shared governance to sector plans on water conservation, efficiency and productivity. All of our committees and project teams have shown remarkable commitment and diligence in completing their tasks, none more so than those working on recommendations for a wetland policy and implementation plan. This was a very challenging project and the team spent several years gathering information and developing and refining its recommendations.

The Council reached consensus on nearly all of the recommendations that it transmitted to the Minister, which was a significant accomplishment considering the complexity and scope of the issue.

This was my first year of involvement with the Council and it's been wonderful to meet so many individuals who are passionate about water and are highly motivated to find innovative solutions to the issues we face. I have learned a great deal about the perspectives of others and am confident that the good working relationships among Council members will help to make us even more effective.

I thank all Council members, including those who stepped down in 2008, for offering their time and their expertise. In particular, I appreciated the support from other members of the executive committee and from Council staff, all of whom made my transition into the role of president much easier. And for the dedicated work of the many individuals who served on project teams, working groups and committees, the Council is very grateful.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Ellis". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jim Ellis

## BOARD MEMBERS

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS GAVE GENEROUSLY OF THEIR TIME AND EXPERTISE TO ADVANCE THE COUNCIL'S WORK IN 2008.

BROAD CATEGORY	DIRECTOR	ALTERNATE
<b>Industry</b>		
Chemical and Petrochemical	Al Kennedy	John Skowronski
Forestry	Keith Murray	
Irrigation	Ron McMullin	Richard Phillips
Livestock	Larry Nolan	Doug Sawyer
Mining	Judy Smith	Don Thompson
Oil and Gas	Kevin Stashin	J. David Rushford
Power Generation	Mike Kelly*	Jim Hackett
<b>Non-Government Organization</b>		
Environmental	Danielle Droitsch	Cheryl Bradley
Environmental	Carolyn Campbell	Bob Cameron
Environmental	Jason Unger	Lindsay Telfer
Fishery Habitat Conservation	Ron Pearson	Peter Aku
Lake Environment Conservation	Jay White*	Danielle Cobbaert
Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils	Dug Major	Celeste Nicholson
Wetland Conservation	Dave Kay	Eric Butterworth
<b>Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities</b>		
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development	Colin Jeffares	Jamie Wuite
Alberta Energy	Peter Watson	David Breakwell
Alberta Environment	Jim Ellis*	Beverly Yee
Alberta Health and Wellness	Alex MacKenzie	Debra Mooney
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	Eric McGhan	Ken Ambrock
Alberta Water Research Institute	David Hill	Shawn Gervais
<b>Other Government</b>		
Large Urban	Rob Pritchard*	Barry Anderson
Métis Settlements	Allan Wells	Jerry Cunningham
Rural	Dwight Oliver	Don Johnson
Small Urban	Richard Quail	Rachel Bocock
<b>Ex-officio</b>	Gordon Edwards*	

\* Executive member as of December 31, 2008.

THE COUNCIL GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WHO STEPPED DOWN IN 2008:

#### Directors:

Bill Berzins, John Donner, Tim Goos, Joe Miller, Brad Pickering, Kim Sturgess, Jim Webber.

#### Alternates:

Bob Barss, Richard Bennett, Darlene Carifelle, Jim Csabay, Susanne Forbrich, Joyce Ingram, Bill McAlpine, Charlotte Moran, Sharla Rauschnig, Jonathan Thompson.



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



THE 2008 ANNUAL REPORT MARKS THE COUNCIL'S FOURTH YEAR, WHICH SAW MOMENTUM AND ENTHUSIASM CONTINUE TO BUILD. PERHAPS THE BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS YEAR WAS THE COMPLETION AND APPROVAL OF SEVEN REPORTS FROM SIX DIFFERENT PROJECT TEAMS.

This represents an extraordinary amount of dedication and effort on the part of our volunteer stakeholders, for which the Council is very grateful. These final reports contained over 150 consensus-based recommendations, including 11 specifically directed to the Council itself. Other project teams will continue their work in 2009 and we look forward to seeing their results.

Our teams and committees are where most of the work really gets done. In 2008, more than 100 individuals from 80 organizations across the province contributed their time and expertise to advance the Council's initiatives. Although we track the hours and in-kind contributions from these individuals and their organizations, we know that the numbers are conservative. The Council could not be effective without the ongoing commitment of our stakeholders, and for this we thank each and every one.

This was also our first full year as an arm's length, not-for-profit organization, which brought both satisfaction and challenges. Getting a new office up and running and putting all the financial and other key systems in place required considerable patience and persistence but we are very happy with the Council's "new home." When I joined the Council in late 2007, a critical task was to recruit for a number of key staff positions. I am delighted to have such a dedicated and passionate team of professionals to help lead this important work.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my job as Executive Director is to share the Council's experiences and activities with others. In 2008, I had the privilege of attending and speaking at more than 20 conferences where I met many stakeholders from across Alberta and other provinces.

Alberta has been a Canadian pioneer in using consensus decision making and there is always a lot of interest in how we've made it work. The multi-stakeholder, consensus-based approach has yielded innovative and creative solutions to difficult problems, resulting in broader support for these outcomes. The Council's decision-making practices and stakeholder relationships continue to improve as team and board members become more familiar with the consensus model.

The goals of Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy remain as important today as they were when first stated back in 2003. Only with ongoing leadership and collaboration from industry, government and non-government stakeholders can this province ensure a sustainable future for all Albertans.



Gordon K. Edwards

### OUR TEAM AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2008

Executive director	Gordon Edwards
Senior project manager	Terry Sly
Project manager	Lorie Wagner
Office manager	Jennifer Beepat
Project manager	Christine Macken
Policy and communications	Kim Sanderson
Media and communications	Val Mellesmoen





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## PROJECT TEAM, WORKING GROUP AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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The following individuals have contributed their time and expertise on Council working groups, project teams and committees. They and the organizations with which they are affiliated are acknowledged for their commitment and support. The Council also thanks the many other individuals within the various stakeholder groups, who reviewed documents, responded to surveys, and volunteered their time in support of our activities.

Peter Aku	Sal Figliuzzi	Bernd Manz	Carrie Selin
Lauren Baldwin	Lorne Fitch	Dave McGee	Jeff Shipton
Nadine Barber	Lisa M. Fox	Ron McMullin	John Skowronski
Bob Barraclough	Les Gammie	Scott Millar	Judy Smith
Maureen Bell	Jim Hackett	Joe Miller	Rich Smith
Mark Bennett	Gerry Haekel	Dan Moore	Stacey Smythe
Rod Bennett	David Hill	George Murphy	Chris Spytz
Ron Bennett	Scott Hillier	Keith Murray	Nancy Stalker
Bill Berzins	Roger Hohm	Lori Neufeld	Kevin Stashin
Meghan Beveridge	John Jagorinec	Celeste Nicholson	Kim Sturgess
Rachel Bocoock	Lori Jeffery-Heaney	Jennifer Nitschelm	Bill Symonds
Mike Boyd	Don Johnson	Tom Olsen	Don Thompson
Diana Boylen	Bob Jones	Tara Payment	Jonathan Thompson
Ken Brown	Mike Kelly	Grant Pearsell	John Trefanenko
Kent Bullock	Al Kennedy	Ron Pearson	Jason Unger
Brian Calliou	Darcy Kirtzinger	Richard Phillips	Darryl Vandenburg
Bob Cameron	Phyllis Kobasiuk	Shirley Pickering	Neil Wandler
Carolyn Campbell	Arlene Kwasniuk	Jaco Poot	Peter Watson
Rennie Cauchie	Tim LeClair	Kirk Popik	Jim Webber
Danielle Cobbaert	David Lloyd	Rob Pritchard	Les Wetter
Jerry Cunningham	Sid Lodewyk	Richard Quail	Jay White
Rowland Davies	Melissa Logan	Ron Renwick	Herb Wiebe
Danielle Droitsch	Derek Lovlin	David Rushford	John Wozniak
Jim Ellis	Stuart Lunn	Doug Sawyer	Jamie Wuite
John Englert	Bill MacDonald	Al Schulz	Bev Yee
Paul Fesko	Bunny Mah	Tracy Scott	

### PROJECT TEAM SUPPORT

Several individuals, all employees of the Government of Alberta, continued to take a lead role supporting project teams that were started prior to the transition to an independent organization. The Council is very grateful for their assistance.

Giselle Beaudry	Petra Rowell
Brian Free	Tim Toth
Cam Lane	Michelle Tremblay
Karen McCallion	
Michelle Olsen	

## COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS IN 2008

THE COUNCIL CONTINUED TO IMPLEMENT ITS 2006 – 2009 BUSINESS PLAN THIS YEAR. IN SUPPORT OF A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO MANAGING WATER IN ALBERTA, THE BUSINESS PLAN CONTAINS TWO GOALS AND EIGHT STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS, AS NOTED IN THE TABLE BELOW.

BUSINESS AND OPERATIONAL PLAN COMPONENT		AREA OF COUNCIL ACTIVITY IN 2008
GOAL	STRATEGY	
<b>GOAL 1:</b> <b>Alberta has an effective, adaptive water management system to achieve the three <i>Water for Life</i> goals</b>	<b>1.1 Oversight</b> — Guide, direct and assess the effectiveness of implementation of the <i>Water for Life</i> strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Water Strategy Renewal</li> <li>■ <i>Water for Life</i> Implementation Review</li> </ul>
	<b>1.2 Policy Advice</b> — Ensure comprehensive and integrated policies are in place to support effective water management systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Intra-Basin Water Movement</li> <li>■ Wetland Policy and Implementation Plan</li> </ul>
	<b>1.3 Advocacy</b> — Be a catalyst for the improvement of the water management system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Water Allocation Transfer System Upgrade</li> <li>■ Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems</li> </ul>
	<b>1.4 Knowledge and Research</b> — Identify priority water knowledge and research needs in Alberta and ensure they are met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Representative on Alberta Water Research Institute's Program and Planning Committee</li> </ul>
	<b>1.5 Resource Information</b> — Identify and champion the resolution of high priority system-wide water resource information requirements (including but not limited to: groundwater, wetlands, in-stream flow needs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Water Resource Information</li> </ul>



LOUISE WAGNER



LOUISE WAGNER

BUSINESS AND OPERATIONAL PLAN COMPONENT		AREA OF COUNCIL ACTIVITY IN 2008
GOAL	STRATEGY	
<b>GOAL 2:</b> <b>Albertans are empowered and engaged in creating shared solutions to the challenges of managing our water and watersheds</b>	<b>2.1 Support WPACs and WSGs</b> — Support and enhance effectiveness of Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Shared Governance</li> <li>■ Watershed Planning Framework</li> </ul>
	<b>2.2 Influence Albertans</b> — Influence Albertans to be personally involved in managing water resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communications</li> </ul>
	<b>2.3 Influence Sectors</b> — Influence and motivate sectors to improve their water management practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Planning</li> <li>■ Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Plan Monitoring</li> </ul>

As well as activities related to the business plan strategies outlined above, the Council undertakes additional work directed at managing and improving its performance and effectiveness. Business and operational planning is one of these key areas of activity. From time to time activities are also undertaken to advance specific areas of

Council interest; the CASA-AWC Integration Committee is an example of this type of work. The areas of Council activity for 2008 are described in more detail on the following pages under the work of the appropriate committee, working group or project team.

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## COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND PROJECT TEAMS

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COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND PROJECT TEAMS ARE WHERE MUCH OF COUNCIL'S SUBSTANTIVE WORK IS DONE. LIKE THE COUNCIL, THESE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER BODIES MAKE DECISIONS BY CONSENSUS.

**Committees** are typically formed to deal with administrative matters and usually carry on their work from year to year.

**Working groups** are formed when the Council decides that more detailed work is needed in an area. The main purpose of a working group is to scope the issue and recommend how it could be addressed. This typically involves preparing terms of reference for a project team.

**Project teams** are established to investigate particular water issues thoroughly and come back to Council with a report and recommendations. Terms of reference for each team are available on the Council's website.

This section briefly describes the accomplishments of each committee, working group and project team, and explains how their work fits within the Council's Business Plan by noting the specific strategy the work supports.

Reports from Council teams are available online at [www.awchome.ca](http://www.awchome.ca).

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Council is guided by a five-person executive committee, which includes a member from each of the four broad categories plus the executive director. The executive committee leads the business planning activities and oversees implementation of the Council's three-year business plan, which was approved by the board in 2007. This plan outlines the vision, mission, goals and strategic priorities; it is the basis for Council's annual operational plans and ensures that the Council remains focused and on track in fulfilling its mandate.

The executive committee sets agendas for each board meeting and responds to issues that arise between board meetings, giving direction to staff or handling the matter

directly, as appropriate. Executive members also liaise with Ministers, communicate with the media when required, and monitor the board's effectiveness and adherence to Council policies and procedures.

### BOARD COMMITTEES

#### CLEAN AIR STRATEGIC ALLIANCE (CASA) — ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL (AWC) INTEGRATION COMMITTEE

This joint committee was established to find opportunities to leverage resources, increase efficiency, build on successes of the two organizations, increase awareness and education, and demonstrate a commitment to the important linkages between air, land and water. The committee met regularly throughout 2008. It is expected to make recommendations to the Council and to CASA.

#### COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Communications Committee oversees implementation of the Council's communications plan, which was approved in 2007. The communications work relates to **Strategy 2.2, Influence Albertans**, which is "Influence Albertans to be personally involved in managing water resources." It supports Council's goal of empowering and engaging Albertans in creating shared solutions to the challenges of managing our water and watersheds. Communications are critical in enhancing public awareness and understanding of the Council, raising awareness of progress being made on the outcomes of *Water for Life*, and ensuring that Council activities are being reported in a timely manner.

In 2008, the committee contracted a communications audit to look at the communication methods and tools used by stakeholders and identify opportunities for the



Council to link with those activities. The committee also developed a communications policy, describing the processes and responsibilities associated with releasing Council documents to the public and working with the media. The board subsequently decided to incorporate this material into the Council's Process Guidelines as a specific section on Communications. This will result in a single concise reference document for use by the board and teams. The Process Guidelines are expected to be approved by the board at its first meeting in 2009.

### **WATER FOR LIFE IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Reviewing implementation progress of the *Water for Life* strategy is a core function of the Water Council. The review report assesses the Government of Alberta's progress in achieving the strategy's three outcomes and three key directions. It supports **Strategy 1.1, Oversight** in the Council's business plan, which is "Guide, direct and assess the effectiveness of implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy."

The Council decided to take a different approach to this, its third, review by establishing a specific committee for this task and engaging a consultant to gather the raw information. The committee is conducting the assessment at a strategic level and will obtain a snapshot of the status, effectiveness and progress of *Water for Life* implementation as of December 31, 2008. The review is using both the original *Water for Life* strategy and the renewed strategy, as well as the Council's two previous review reports and its *Recommendations for Renewal* as the basis of its assessment. Sources of information include interviews with government staff who are coordinating implementation and a survey of key sector contacts identified by members of the Council's board. The final review report is expected in the first half of 2009.

## WORKING GROUPS AND PROJECT TEAMS

### CONSERVATION, EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY SECTOR PLAN PROJECT TEAM

This team was formed in March 2007. Its aim was to ensure that water conservation, efficiency and productivity (CEP) plans are developed consistently across sectors and watersheds in Alberta, in a way that reflects a collaborative and integrated approach to managing water and watersheds at all levels. This work supports **Strategy 1.3, Advocacy**, and **Strategy 2.3, Influence Sectors**. It is a very important component of the Council's work and will contribute to achieving all three goals of the *Water for Life* strategy.

The CEP plans will take a sectoral approach to meeting specific conservation, efficiency and productivity targets, with implementation at the regional level, on a company by company, or community by community basis. All of the plans will be made available to the public, and accountability for implementation will come via an annual reporting process through the Alberta Water Council.

To assist sectors in developing their plans, the team prepared a document for them to follow, noting the need to, among other things, identify best management practices and benchmarks as part of their plans. The irrigation, municipal, power generation, oil and gas,

mining and oil sands, chemical and petrochemical, and forestry sectors have all committed to have a sector CEP plan in place by the end of 2010. Two plans were already being developed in 2008 for the irrigation and municipal sectors. The team also outlined and evaluated tools to address issues of sector participation and accountability. The final report, approved by the board in September, contained 21 recommendations to sectors, the Government of Alberta and the Water Council.

### CONSERVATION, EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY SECTOR PLAN MONITORING WORKING GROUP

In September, the Council set up a Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity (CEP) Sector Plan Monitoring Working Group to develop terms of reference for a new project team, as recommended in the final report of the CEP Sector Plan Project Team. In the last quarter of 2008, Council staff worked with board members to identify sectors and representatives for the working group. Terms of reference for the new project team will be presented to the board at the March 2009 meeting. This working group and the resulting project team support **Strategy 1.3, Advocacy**, which is to "Be a catalyst for the improvement of the water management system," and **Strategy 2.3, Influence Sectors**, which is to "Influence and motivate sectors to improve their water management practices."



JUDY SMITH



## HEALTHY AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS PROJECT TEAM

In its recommendations for renewal of the *Water for Life* strategy, the Council noted that progress on the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems (HAE) element of the strategy was lagging. In March 2008, the board established a working group to develop terms of reference for a project team to examine how the Council could advance this element of the strategy. Terms of reference were approved in June. This work supports **Strategy 1.3, Advocacy**, and will contribute to achieving goal 2 of the *Water for Life* strategy.

The project team has three broad tasks:

- Develop a working definition of the term “healthy aquatic ecosystems.”
- Recommend potential HAE projects of provincial importance and identify which groups are most suited to lead them.
- Identify potential HAE projects that may be undertaken within the Water Council’s mandate.

The team’s proposed working definition was contained in a short document that was approved by the board in December. This report provides further perspective on the terms used in the definition, as well as additional context on its intended use.

The team is working closely with the *Water for Life* Implementation Review Committee to gather information on healthy aquatic ecosystem initiatives and needs. It expects to complete its work and submit a final report and recommendations in the first half of 2009.

## INTRA-BASIN WATER MOVEMENT PROJECT TEAM

In 2008, the Council continued its work to address the request from Environment Minister Rob Renner regarding intra-basin movement of water. The Minister asked Council to determine if the current approach on moving water from one sub-basin for use in another sub-basin is still valid and what, if any, changes should be made to the policy and under what conditions.

This work supports the Council’s **Strategy 1.2, Policy Advice**, which is “Ensure comprehensive and integrated policies are in place to support effective water management systems”; it relates to all three goals of the *Water for Life* strategy.

The team identified concerns related to intra-basin movement, reviewed Alberta’s existing approach to intra-basin water allocations, and compared Alberta’s allocation approach with other appropriate jurisdictions. The result was advice and recommendations in three main areas:

- Values and process principles that should guide a process for intra-basin water movement allocation decisions,
- Ways to strengthen the approach to intra-basin water movement decisions, and
- Issues beyond the scope of this project where further work is needed to fully address the concerns.

The Council approved the team’s report and transmitted it to Minister Renner and other stakeholders in June 2008.

## SHARED GOVERNANCE AND WATERSHED PLANNING FRAMEWORK PROJECT TEAM

This team was given the task of providing clarity and understanding about what shared governance means and how it can be effectively implemented to deliver the outcomes of the *Water for Life* strategy. This work relates to **Strategy 2.1, Support WPACs and WSGs**, which is “Support and enhance effectiveness of Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups.” Because the WPACs and WSGs are instrumental to the effectiveness of the *Water for Life* strategy, this is a particularly important aspect of the Council’s work. The team held several workshops to gather stakeholder input as it completed its tasks.

The first key product was a shared governance framework describing roles, responsibilities, relationships and accountabilities for the three main *Water for Life* partnerships: the Water Council, WPACs, and WSGs. The team defined shared governance as the situation in which collaborative partnerships share responsibility (risk and rewards), but where Government retains accountability to develop and deliver policy, planning, and programs or services that support the achievement of shared outcomes. The framework — entitled *Strengthening Partnerships: A Shared Governance Framework for Water for Life Collaborative Partnerships* — contains 13 key findings and recommendations and was accepted by the board in September.

The second main task for the team was to clarify the process and the content that should guide the creation of watershed management plans. The team presented its final report, entitled *Recommendations for a Watershed Management Planning Framework for Alberta*, to the board in December. The document and its 12 recommendations support the development of a framework that will integrate shared governance and a watershed approach into the existing policy and legislation to improve watershed management in Alberta. The document also identifies key components of watershed management planning and provides guidance for partners working together under a shared governance structure to plan and implement watershed management plans to achieve *Water for Life* goals. Finally, it discusses and makes recommendations about the authority and resourcing of a plan and its integration with other land and resource management planning initiatives.

## WATER ALLOCATION TRANSFER SYSTEM UPGRADE PROJECT TEAM

In June, the board approved terms of reference for the Water Allocation Transfer System Upgrade Project Team. The team will identify and recommend improvements to Alberta’s water allocation transfer system, as well as consider ways to improve the management of environmental and social concerns. A need for this work emerged because portions of the South Saskatchewan River Basin are now closed to new applications for water licences, and other basins may face similar shortages in the future. Improvements to the water allocation transfer



MICHAEL BARR



LOUISE WAGNER

system are expected to result in water being made available for potential new licensees and for existing licensees that are experiencing shortages. This work supports the Council's **Strategy 1.3, Advocacy**, and relates to all three goals of the *Water for Life* strategy.

The team focused its work in 2008 on gaining a better understanding of the current water allocation transfer system along with the interests and desired outcomes of all sectors for the system. To expand the team's knowledge as well as that of other stakeholders and policy makers, the team is hosting an international symposium in March 2009. Information from that conference will be widely shared. The team expects to present its final report and recommendations to the Council in 2009.

## WATER RESOURCE INFORMATION WORKING GROUP

The 2006 – 2009 Business Plan identified four challenges to the advancement of water management in Alberta, one of which is information gaps in water research and monitoring. More information on water resources is needed to achieve the three goals in the *Water for Life* strategy. Specifically, Council's **Strategy 1.5, Resource Information**, is to "Identify and champion the resolution of high-priority, system-wide water resource information requirements, particularly in the areas of groundwater, wetlands and in-stream flow needs."

In 2007, a number of other agencies were launching a variety of initiatives that affected water information in Alberta, and the context for this work was changing rapidly. Thus the Council decided to suspend this working group until the impacts of these initiatives could be better understood. The Council established a new group late in 2008 to re-examine work underway in the Knowledge and Research element of the *Water for Life* strategy and recommend how the Council could best advance this key direction of the strategy.

## WATER STRATEGY RENEWAL PROJECT TEAM

In 2007, the Council accepted Environment Minister Renner's request to lead the renewal of the *Water for Life* strategy. The intent was to build on the experience gained to date and to highlight strategic areas of focus for the next phase of the strategy's implementation. This work supports **Strategy 1.1, Oversight**, and is important in ensuring that implementation of *Water for Life* is energized and advanced.

The Council transmitted its renewal report and recommendations to the Minister in January 2008.<sup>1</sup> Those recommendations were accepted by government and guided the renewal process. In November 2008, Minister Renner announced the renewal of *Water for Life*, which incorporated feedback from the Council.

## WETLAND POLICY PROJECT TEAM

The Government of Alberta asked the Council to develop a wetland policy and implementation plan for the province. This was a high priority and the work culminated in September 2008 when the Council transmitted its recommendations to the Minister of Environment. This work supports **Strategy 1.2, Policy Advice**, and relates directly or indirectly to all three goals in the *Water for Life* strategy.

The Wetland Policy Project Team was formed in 2005. Between 2005 and 2008, the team gathered information on wetland legislation and policies from many other jurisdictions, reviewed national and international approaches to wetland management, identified information gaps, and conducted two extensive public consultations. The team also engaged the Council's board members to obtain their feedback and guidance on draft recommendations. In response to the board's feedback, the team did additional work to develop scenarios to test how application of the policy could work in different situations and landscapes throughout the province. The team's efforts resulted in two comprehensive reports:

- *Recommendations for a New Alberta Wetland Policy*, and
- *Recommendations for an Alberta Wetland Policy Implementation Plan*.

The recommendations focused on protecting Alberta's wetlands by managing impacts, setting objectives, encouraging stewardship and building knowledge and capacity.

In September, the board transmitted the reports to the Minister of Environment, along with additional documentation outlining some areas where consensus was not fully achieved. The reports were also released to the public in September and are available on the Council's website. As of the end of 2008, the Government of Alberta was preparing its response to the Council's recommendations.

<sup>1</sup> This work was described more fully in the Council's 2007 annual report.

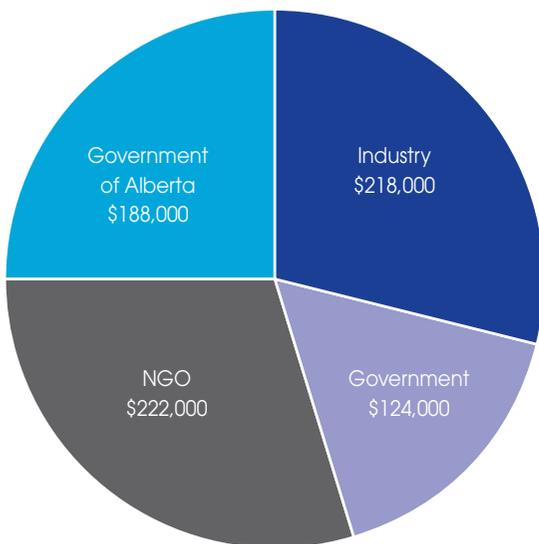
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## IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

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Significant in-kind support has been extremely valuable in helping the Council do its work. Industry, government and non-government organizations have all provided such support, largely through the participation of their staff. A number of organizations have also hosted meetings and other events. The Council has tried to assign a dollar value to this support by examining time and travel costs and other contributions, but can confidently say that the true value of these contributions is both under-recorded and underestimated. The Council is reviewing its system of tracking in-kind contributions in an effort to improve ease and accuracy of monitoring this important information.

The total in-kind contributions for 2008 amounted to over 8,000 hours, which represents about \$750,000 in donated time. The chart below shows these in-kind contributions, which are gratefully acknowledged.



## AUDITOR'S REPORT

### Hawkings Epp Dumont LLP

#### Chartered Accountants

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E.M. Torrens, CA				Email: hed@hed-edm.com

#### AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Members of Alberta Water Council Association  
Edmonton, Alberta

We have audited the statement of financial position of the Alberta Water Council Association (the "Association") as at December 31, 2008 and the statements of revenues and expenditures, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Association's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association as at December 31, 2008 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.



Edmonton, Alberta  
January 20, 2009

HAWKINGS EPP DUMONT LLP  
Chartered Accountants

**Founding Partners**  
F.J. Bruha, CA (Deceased)  
A.W. Whelan, CA (Retired)

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\*Professional Corporation

# SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS — ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL ASSOCIATION

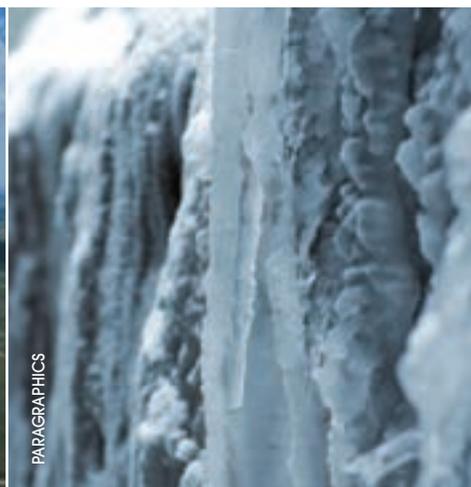
## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2008

	2008
<b>ASSETS</b>	
CURRENT	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 422,379
Accrued interest receivable	465
Goods and Services Tax recoverable	11,610
Prepaid expenses	35,215
	<u>469,669</u>
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT	44,667
	<u>\$ 514,336</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	
CURRENT	
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 62,873
Deferred contributions — core	406,296
	<u>469,169</u>
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS — PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT	44,667
	<u>513,836</u>
NET ASSETS	
Invested in property and equipment	—
Unrestricted net assets	500
	<u>500</u>
	<u>\$ 514,336</u>



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## STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2008

	2008
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Grants from third parties	\$ 875,691
Amortization of deferred contributions — property and equipment	18,346
Interest	12,860
Donations	500
	<u>907,397</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Human resources	390,662
Consultants	208,627
Director and stakeholder support	121,295
Administration	69,878
Meetings and conferences	29,388
Amortization	18,346
Travel	16,727
Repairs and maintenance	16,613
Professional fees	13,931
Advertising and promotion	6,514
Catering	5,924
Rental	5,040
Relocation	2,006
Insurance	1,946
	<u>906,897</u>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>	<u>\$ 500</u>

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2008

	Invested in Property and Equipment	Unrestricted Net Assets	2008
<b>NET ASSETS — BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Excess of revenue over expenses		500	500
Contribution — property and equipment	63,013	(63,013)	
Property and equipment purchases	(63,013)	63,013	
Amortization of property and equipment	(18,346)	18,346	
Amortization of deferred contributions — property and equipment	18,346	(18,346)	
<b>NET ASSETS — END OF YEAR</b>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 500</u>	<u>\$ 500</u>

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## ORGANIZATIONS

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THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS HAVE SUPPORTED THE ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL THROUGH THEIR GENEROUS IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.

These commitments have been instrumental in helping the Council undertake its work and are deeply appreciated. The Council also values the contributions from the many organizations that have been engaged behind the scenes and are too numerous to track.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	ATCO Power Ltd.	Municipal District of Taber
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development	Battle River Watershed Alliance	Municipal District of Wainwright
Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties	Bow River Basin Council	Natural Resources Canada
Alberta Barley Commission	Bow River Irrigation District	North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance
Alberta Beef Producers	Bow Riverkeeper	Northwest Hydraulics Consultants
Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers	NOVA Chemicals
Alberta Chamber of Resources	Canadian Petroleum Products Institute - Western Division	Red Deer River Watershed Alliance
Alberta Chapter of the Safe Drinking Water Foundation	City of Calgary	Shell Canada Ltd.
Alberta Conservation Association	City of Edmonton	Sierra Club of Canada, Prairie Chapter
Alberta Economic Development Authority	Clearwater County	Southern Alberta Group for the Environment
Alberta Energy	ConocoPhillips Canada	South Peace Environmental Association
Alberta Environment	County of Warner	Special Areas Board
Alberta Forest Products Association	Cows and Fish Program	St. Mary River Irrigation District
Alberta Health and Wellness	Devon Canada	Syncrude Canada Ltd.
Alberta Irrigation Projects Association	Ducks Unlimited Canada	The Banff Centre
Alberta Lake Management Society	Encana Corporation	Town of Okotoks
Alberta Milk	Environment Canada	Town of St. Paul
Alberta Municipal Affairs	Environmental Law Centre	TransAlta Corporation
Alberta Newsprint Company	EPCOR Water Services	Trout Unlimited Canada - Alberta Chapter
Alberta Research Council	Fish Habitat Conservation Collective	University of Calgary, Faculty of Law
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Water Matters Society of Alberta
Alberta Urban Municipalities Association	Highwood Water Management Plan Public Advisory Committee	Water Rights Inc.
Alberta Water Research Institute	Imperial Oil	Watershed Planning and Advisory Council Collective
Alberta Wilderness Association	Intensive Livestock Working Group	Watershed Stewardship Groups
Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd.	Matrix Solutions Inc.	Western Irrigation District
Aquatera Utilities Inc.	Métis Settlements General Council	
	Milk River Watershed Council Canada	
	Millar Western - Pulp Division	
	Municipal District of Rocky View	

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## OTHER RESOURCES

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THE ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL'S REPORTS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE OR ON REQUEST TO COUNCIL STAFF.

Other agencies and organizations have published materials that have been useful to the Council and may be of interest to readers. Some of these are noted below.

### ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

The following key documents are available on the Alberta Water Council website at [www.awchome.ca](http://www.awchome.ca), under "Publications."

- *Water for Life, Recommendations for Renewal* (2008)
- *Intra-Basin Water Movement: Major Principles and Recommendations* (2008)
- *Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Planning* (2008)
- *Strengthening Partnerships: A Shared Governance Framework for Water for Life Collaborative Partnership* (2008)
- *Recommendations for a New Alberta Wetland Policy* (2008)
- *Recommendations for an Alberta Wetland Policy Implementation Plan* (2008)
- *Recommendations for a Watershed Management Planning Framework for Alberta* (2008)
- *Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity: Principles, Definitions, Performance Measures and Environmental Indicators* (2007)
- *Water Policy Issues and Gaps* (2007)
- *Review of Implementation Progress of Water for Life, 2005 – 2006* (2007)
- *Review of Implementation Progress of Water for Life, 2004 – 2005* (2005)
- *2006 – 2009 Business Plan* (2006)
- *Water Research Strategy* (2006), published by the Alberta Science and Research Authority





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## ANNUAL REPORTS

- *Alberta Water Council 2007 Annual Report*
- *Alberta Water Council 2005 – 2006 Annual Report*
- *Alberta Water Council 2004 – 2005 Annual Report*

## WATER FOR LIFE STRATEGY AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

A number of documents related to the *Water for Life* strategy are available online at [www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/index.html](http://www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/index.html).

## WATERSHED PLANNING AND ADVISORY COUNCILS

- Battle River Watershed Alliance, [www.battleriverwatershed.ca](http://www.battleriverwatershed.ca)
- Beaver River Watershed Alliance
- Bow River Basin Council, [www.brbc.ab.ca](http://www.brbc.ab.ca)
- Lesser Slave Watershed Council, [www.lswc.ca](http://www.lswc.ca)
- Milk River Watershed Council Canada, [www.milkriverwatershedcouncil.ca](http://www.milkriverwatershedcouncil.ca)
- North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, [www.nswa.ab.ca](http://www.nswa.ab.ca)
- Oldman Watershed Council, [www.oldmanbasin.org](http://www.oldmanbasin.org)
- Red Deer River Watershed Alliance, [www.rdrwa.ca](http://www.rdrwa.ca)
- South East Alberta Watershed Alliance, [www.seawa.ca](http://www.seawa.ca)

## OTHER ALBERTA RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

- Alberta Stewardship Network, [www.ab.stewardshipcanada.ca](http://www.ab.stewardshipcanada.ca)
- Alberta Water Research Institute, [www.albertaingenuity.ca/ingenuity/institutes/water/research](http://www.albertaingenuity.ca/ingenuity/institutes/water/research)



LOUISE WAGNER



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