



ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL
BUSINESS PLAN

2014-
2016



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INTRODUCTION



The Alberta Water Council is a multi-stakeholder partnership that provides leadership, expertise and sector knowledge to engage and empower industry, non-government organizations, and governments to work collaboratively to achieve the outcomes of the *Water for Life* strategy. The Council advises the Government of Alberta on matters pertaining to the successful achievement of the outcomes of the *Water for Life* strategy and provides advice to governments and stakeholders on effective water management policies, practices, and solutions to water issues.

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 operates by consensus and is guided by an Executive Committee that represents the Council's diverse Membership. The Council receives an annual grant from the Government of Alberta to cover core operating costs and is responsible for its own financial management. This Business Plan is predicated on the Council's demonstrated and ongoing ability to leverage the substantial time and money contributed by its diverse and committed stakeholders.

The Council has completed a number of diverse and challenging projects including:

- Water Research Strategy (January 2006)
- Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity: Principles, Definitions, Performance Measures and Environmental Indicators (January 2007)
- Alberta's Water Management System Policy Issues and Gaps (November 2007)
- *Water for Life* Recommendations for Renewal (January 2008)
- Intra-Basin Water Movement Major Principles and Recommendations (June 2008)
- Recommendations for Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Sector Planning (September 2008)
- Recommendations for a New Alberta Wetland Policy (September 2008)
- Recommendations for an Alberta Wetland Policy Implementation Plan (September 2008)
- Strengthening Partnerships: A Shared Governance Framework for *Water for Life* Collaborative Partnerships (September 2008)
- Recommendations for a Watershed Management Planning Framework for Alberta (December 2008)
- Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems - A Working Definition (December 2008)
- Recommended Projects to Advance the Goal of Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems (March 2009)
- Recommendations for Improving Alberta's Water Allocation Transfer System (August 2009)
- Provincial Ecological Criteria for Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems (November 2009)



- Moving from Words to Actions Recommendations to Improve Communication, Coordination and Collaboration Between and Among *Water for Life* Partnerships (June 2011)
- Recommendations to Improve Non-Point Source Pollution Management in Alberta (March 2013)
- Sector Planning for Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity (March 2013)
- Review of Implementation Progress of *Water for Life*, 2004 – 2005 (October 2005)
- Review of Implementation Progress of *Water for Life*, 2005 – 2006 (April 2007)
- Review of Implementation Progress of *Water for Life*, 2006 – 2008 (June 2009)
- Review of Implementation Progress of *Water for Life*, 2009 – 2011 (October 2012)

Based on these accomplishments, the Council is defining its future role by identifying its strategic priorities and building on its established strengths.

The Council has developed a clear focus for the future — to be seen by governments, industry and non-governmental organizations as a valued policy advisor on water issues. The Council offers solutions that are timely, integrated with other major policy initiatives, and based on sound information and analysis. Decision-makers can be confident that the recommendations from the Council are built on broad consensus.

This Business Plan for 2014 – 2016 presents a clear direction for the Alberta Water Council as: the steward for the implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy, a trusted policy advisor, a network for individuals and organizations to act together on water issues, and a forum for discussion and consensus. Through the Alberta Water Council, Alberta sectors can work together to ensure that our water resource is safe, healthy and well-managed for current and future generations.

Vision

Albertans work together to ensure our water resource is safe, healthy and well-managed for current and future generations.

Mission

The Alberta Water Council is a multi-stakeholder partnership that provides leadership, expertise and sector knowledge to engage and empower industry, non-governmental organizations, and governments to work collaboratively to achieve the outcomes of the *Water for Life* strategy.

Values

The Alberta Water Council is characterized and guided by the following attributes:

Collaborative:

The Council works with its stakeholders to build consensus.

Fair:

The Council treats all its stakeholders equally and makes decisions without favouritism or prejudice.

Innovative:

The Council brings together diverse expertise and experience to develop creative solutions to water management issues.

Respectful:

The Council shows consideration for all its stakeholders by actively listening and seeking to understand ideas and perspectives while developing consensus.

Timely:

The Council responds to issues in a timely fashion.

Transparent:

The Council is open and accessible, with established processes to share information about its activities.

Trustworthy:

The Council is seen as a respected advisory body to government and stakeholders through the application of its multi-stakeholder, consensus building process.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Alberta Water Council identified a number of challenges to the advancement of its mission that also provide opportunities for success.

Commitment to *Water for Life*

- The Council recognizes that all Albertans are responsible for the wise use and management of our limited and precious water resources. Implementing the *Water for Life* strategy is a shared responsibility and a high priority for Albertans. The strategy is the focus of the Council's work, which entails regular review of implementation progress, identifying emerging issues and directional guidance as needed to achieve the desired outcomes. Working together toward common goals can pose challenges for communication, coordination, priority-setting, and the effective resolution of water issues.
- An opportunity exists for the Council to continue to use its collaborative consensus-based process to help governments, industries and non-governmental partners work together to achieve *Water for Life* goals, as well as identify emerging issues and propose solid solutions. Implementing the *Water for Life* strategy requires the support of, and alignment with, all those who share responsibility for water management. The Council has an opportunity to demonstrate it has an effective process for the resolution of water management issues and that it identifies and promotes strategies for the successful implementation of *Water for Life* that are supported and coordinated across all partners.

Policy Gaps and Integration

- Gaps in our knowledge and understanding of water resources remain. Information and knowledge are the foundations of effective water management and the basis for sound decisions. Policy gaps also continue to be identified in Alberta when conflicts arise over water management issues.
- Air, land and water are connected and their management should be integrated to achieve desired outcomes. The recent development of several provincial policy initiatives, including the Land-use Framework, Cumulative Effects Management, the Provincial Energy Strategy, and the Renewed Clean Air Strategy, means that the *Water for Life* strategy must be implemented in a broader context.
- Many opportunities exist for the Council to use its strong collaborative process to identify policy, knowledge, and information gaps, pinpoint areas where integration is needed, and provide timely consensus-based advice to its partners and stakeholders, including the Government of Alberta. As projects are initiated, the Council gathers high-quality information directly related to those issues and is well-positioned to share the results with all *Water for Life* partners through formal reports, symposia and other mechanisms. Providing valued policy advice has the potential to proactively address water management issues in a positive and innovative manner.

Forum for Discussion and Collaboration

- A key strength of the Council has been its volunteer board and teams, who are drawn from a wide range of interested and dedicated Albertans. The Council's collaborative, consensus process is often unfamiliar and new members need time to understand and feel comfortable with this approach. The challenge continues to be to provide the right environment for Council partners and stakeholders to learn about important water issues from a variety of perspectives, and to seek solutions through respectful discussion.
- The Council works to continuously improve and enhance its processes and approaches in ways that support learning, informed discussion and optimal solutions to water management issues in Alberta. These ideas and approaches are also shared with Council partners that make decisions by consensus.



CORE BUSINESSES

Core businesses reflect the ongoing key responsibilities that an organization must do well to support its mission. The core businesses of the Council are:

1. Steward the Implementation of *Water for Life*
2. Provide Valued Policy Advice
3. Provide a Forum for Discussion and Resolution of Water Issues

Core Businesses, Goals, Strategies, Performance Measures and Targets

CORE BUSINESS 1: Steward the Implementation of *Water for Life*

GOAL 1

The implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy is reviewed in a timely and thorough manner.

Strategies:

- 1.1 Regularly review the implementation progress of the *Water for Life* strategy following the approved guide
- 1.2 Ensure Alberta Water Council recommendations are congruent and integrated with other provincial initiatives
- 1.3 Incorporate Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils' progress, achievements and recommendations in the Alberta Water Council's review

Performance Measure:

- 1.a Percentage of Alberta Water Council members contributing to the *Water for Life Implementation Review* report, which is due 18 months after the period under review.

Target: 90% of Council members contribute to the *Water for Life Implementation Review* report.

CORE BUSINESS 2: Provide Valued Policy Advice

GOAL 2

Alberta Water Council's policy recommendations are timely, based on credible information, implementable, have consensus and support *Water for Life* goals and timelines.

Strategies:

- 2.1 Provide advice on identified policy needs
- 2.2 Regularly review the water management system for policy issues and gaps
- 2.3 Provide advice on gaps in water research and water resource information
- 2.4 Influence and enable sectors to develop, use and implement best management practices

Performance Measures:

- 2.a Percentage of projects completed in the timeline prescribed in the approved project terms of reference.

Target: 100%

- 2.b Percentage of issues identified by Alberta Water Council project teams addressed with consensus recommendations.

Target: 85%

CORE BUSINESS 3: Provide a Forum for Discussion and Resolution of Water Issues

GOAL 3

Alberta Water Council has an effective process for sectors to discuss and resolve water management issues.

Strategies:

- 3.1 Continuously improve the processes and tools that support the consensus process
- 3.2 Promote a collaborative and trusting environment to facilitate consensus decision-making
- 3.3 Provide our stakeholders with opportunities to increase their knowledge of water management in Alberta
- 3.4 Encourage senior representatives from all sectors to develop a culture of active sector participation in the work of the Alberta Water Council
- 3.5 Develop, implement and evaluate a stakeholder-based communications strategy
- 3.6 Host events that explore emerging water management issues that are important to Council stakeholders

Performance Measures:

- 3.a Percentage of directors satisfied that the Alberta Water Council's processes and communications are addressing the needs of the board.

Target: 85% of directors are satisfied with the communication strategy and its implementation.

- 3.b Percentage of identified process gaps being appropriately addressed within 6 months of coming to the Alberta Water Council's attention.

Target: 100%









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