



Working together to ensure and sustain

- a safe water supply,
- a healthy environment
- and a prosperous economy



## Table of Contents

### The Waterfall

New and exciting features from the Council as well as director and alternate profiles

### The Confluence

Find out about the great work project teams and working groups are doing

### Water Pipes

Your link to Council business

## IN THIS ISSUE

The Waterfall	The Confluence	Water Pipes
<p><b><i>AWC Summer Tour visits Wetlands near Camrose</i></b></p>  	<p><b><i>Final Stretch for NPS Team</i></b></p> <p><b><i>7 Water Using Sectors Complete CEP Plans</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Uncovering Potential Approaches for Riparian Land Management</i></b></p> 	<p><b><i>Final Stages for WFL Implementation Committee</i></b></p>  

## Drips and Drops

### Next AWC Board Meeting

The next AWC Board Meeting will be held Thursday October 25, 2012 in Calgary.

### Annual Report

Reflecting on the work of the Council during the past year, the 2011 Annual Report has been released and posted on the Council's website [www.awchome.ca](http://www.awchome.ca).

### AWC Presentation Opportunity

Would you like a presentation from the AWC staff on how the Council works and an update on its projects? If you are interested in raising the awareness of AWC within your group or sector, please email [info@awchome.ca](mailto:info@awchome.ca).



## THE WATERFALL

### AWC Summer Tour Visits Wetlands near Camrose

The day before the June meeting, Board members enjoyed a wetlands field trip sponsored by Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), where they had the chance to see and learn about specific DUC projects and programs.



The day featured several wetland restoration projects in the Camrose area and was a great opportunity for Directors and Alternates to learn more about the function and value of wetlands with real life examples. The tour highlighted several projects that DUC has been involved with over the last 15 to 20 years.

Tour organizers explained that DUC wetland

## Spotlight on Board Members

Check out our board member profile in *The Waterfall* section. This is a regular feature about a Council director or alternate, along with interesting water news from their sector.

## Council's Newsletter

The Council's newsletter will arrive at your inbox three times per year, shortly after each board meeting, providing a quick update for board members and other interested stakeholders. Comments and suggestions are welcome, so please tell us what you think. Email your feedback to [info@awchome.ca](mailto:info@awchome.ca). We look forward to hearing from you!

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conservation work has resulted in the acquisition of approximately 97,000 acres of land in Alberta, and has another 2.1 million acres of both public and private land under agreement. The tour included wetland restoration projects on land owned by DUC as well as land on which DUC has agreements with private landowners.

First stop was the Mallows Lake Project near Big Hay Lake. In the early 1990s, 500 acres of wetlands were reduced to about 200 acres. DUC worked with the landowner to meet their need for infrastructure protection and good drainage of fertile agricultural lands. Together they came up with a plan that met everyone's needs and actually put 80% of wetlands, that were historically at the this site, back on the landscape. Through working with the landowner, DUC was able to purchase part of the land and have an agreement with the landowner for the rest. A similar combination of purchases and agreements has led to successful restoration in several other basins in the area. This is a good case study of what is possible when stakeholders work together to identify their needs, share resources, and commit to a plan. The plan at this site has been working since the mid-90s, so it is a sustainable plan and could be replicated on a watershed scale.



The second stop was the Martin Project. This land had been drained previously and used for pasture and hay but within two years of DUC involvement, the restored wetland was fully functional, which is pretty remarkable how quickly that was done. DUC's approach is to utilize historical photography and map products to determine wetland area/elevation, type or class and then restore to previous full supply.

Tracy Scott, Head - Industry & Gov't Relations DUC and an alternate on the AWC board, provided an overview of ecosystem services and the related DUC projects in Alberta. "Ecosystem services" are the goods and services provided to society by nature. Wetlands provide a broad suite of such services: flood attenuation, ground water recharge, water storage, removal of herbicides or contaminants, and increased biodiversity. Tracy noted that "the level of biodiversity provided by wetlands is known to be second only to the rainforest." He also says that "as a province and a society, we are starting to look more closely at this whole suite of services provided by natural features on the landscape and understanding that they have a real, measurable value to society. Gradually we will see this understanding incorporated into decision making."

The final stop looked at wetland restoration at the Labyrinth Lake Conservation Area. DUC purchased this land in 2010 and since then 59 basins have been restored on three quarter sections. A DUC project dedication ceremony also occurred at this stop to acknowledge the Environment Canada Natural Area Conservation Program (NAC) funding. In Alberta in the last four years DUC has completed 45 projects, totaling 24,000 acres in designated high priority waterfowl landscape utilizing NAC funding.



After a great afternoon of learning about wetlands, the tour ended with a delicious BBQ dinner at Labyrinth Lake. One final surprise in the evening involved the bus getting stuck on the way out of the BBQ location! Thanks again to everyone who came out to enjoy the day. For more information on the DUC's work in Alberta, visit their website

at [www.ducks.ca/province/ab/index.html](http://www.ducks.ca/province/ab/index.html).

[Back to Top](#)

## Final Stretch for NPS Team

Members of the NPS pollution project team have been busy gathering information to guide their final report and recommendations. Phase 1 of the project involved an assessment of the current state of non-point source pollution knowledge in Alberta and phase 2 involved a review of policies, practices, and regulatory tools used by select jurisdictions to manage non-point source pollution. The team is using the knowledge gleaned from these two major reports to develop its own report and recommendations.

The team is currently making some final adjustments to the draft report. Stakeholder engagement on the document is planned for late summer and fall, when sectors will have about six weeks to gather input on the draft. The team looks forward to hearing what sectors think about the draft report and recommendations.



## The 7 major water using sectors complete CEP Plans

At the June board meeting two sectors presented their water CEP plans. Al Schulz presented the chemical sector plan prepared by the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada (CIAC). He provided an overview of the industry in Alberta and the CIAC's Responsible Care® program, briefly describing water use patterns and the ten CEP opportunities identified in the plan. The sector regards the CEP plan as a work in progress and expects to make further enhancements in future years. Implementation progress will be monitored annually by the CIAC Alberta Environmental Quality Committee. Reflecting back on the CEP process, Al notes that "CIAC supports the 'Water for Life' objectives. Implementing CEP is important for the protection and enhancement of our water resources for current and future uses."



Jim Hackett presented the water CEP plan for the power generation sector. The CEP plan focuses on the whole sector, but was coordinated by three generation companies (ATCO Power, Capital Power and TransAlta). About 30 power generators are active in Alberta. The sector has already made a number of significant improvements to improve water CEP through technology and the transition away from thermal generation. Water is consumed in this sector mainly through cooling and water loss through evaporation. The sector recognizes that regulatory changes to achieve one environmental objective could affect another objective; e.g., air emission controls could increase water consumption. The sector identified six opportunity areas for water CEP, including some that will provide direct benefits to consumers.



Both sectors are considering engaging WPACs and other interested groups for feedback prior to final adoption of their CEP plans. Both plans are expected to be finalized by

October 2012.

All seven major water-using sectors have now presented their CEP plans to Council which is quite an accomplishment!

The CEP team is getting feedback on its draft report from sectors and Member organizations and plans to present its final report at the October 2012 Board meeting.

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## Uncovering potential approaches for riparian land management



This team has been working with a consultant since January on the *Current state of riparian lands in Alberta, and the management and stewardship “best practices” (policy, practices and procedures) in Alberta and other jurisdictions* report.

The consultant, Fiera Biological Consulting, has done a very thorough evaluation of the state of knowledge on both the extent and health of riparian land in Alberta, which proved to be an extremely challenging endeavor. Some of the major findings from the consultant’s report are:

- Riparian land management should be set within an integrated ecosystem management framework that considers riparian lands as components of a larger ecosystem.
- A province-wide framework for riparian assessment should be created that addresses the scaling of information from the local to the regional scale.
- Establish a publicly accessible repository for riparian land data that includes information related to both riparian extent and health.
- Calibrate field-based riparian health assessment methods that are currently in use against remotely sensed techniques to test the efficacy of adopting a remote sensing riparian health assessment approach, such that remote sensing information can be used to assist with planning at larger spatial scales (e.g., regional and provincial scales).
- Establish clear, consistent, and enforceable standards for determining riparian setback widths across the province based on the best existing science.
- Create more incentives for adopting behaviours that create desired environmental outcomes.
- Consider developing and implementing a new provincial policy dedicated to riparian land management. As an alternative to developing a new riparian land policy, consider improving the implementation of existing legislative and policy tools that are currently in place for riparian land management.
- Regularly evaluate the success of scientific, policy, economic, and social management actions.

The consultant’s report will inform the team as it develops its final report and recommendations.

The team is also finalizing a definition for *Riparian Lands*. The team reviewed comments from their sectors and board members and adjusted the draft definition as appropriate. Now that the consultant’s work is completed, the team will consider whether any new information may need to be reflected in the definition. A final draft definition will be presented to the Board in October, followed by the team’s final report and recommendations in March 2013.



[Back to Top](#)

## **WATER PIPES**

### **Final Stages for WFL Implementation committee**

Part of the Council's core business is to regularly review implementation progress of the *Water for Life* strategy. This review is a "snapshot" of WFL as of December 31, 2011 and will inform the next renewal of WFL in 2013.

A great deal of work has been completed by the committee to date, but some new things are emerging that the committee needs a little more time to address. Key themes and highlights of the draft report were shared with the board. The committee is working to align the report with its terms of reference and to also take into account prior recommendations to ensure its final report provides clear guidance to the Government of Alberta.

Sector engagement will take place over the summer with the final report coming to the board in October. Watch for more details on the committee's report in the next issue!



[Back to Top](#)

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