

Water for Life Implementation Review 2016-2019 (2021)

Rec #	Recommendation	Implementer(s)	Implementation Target	2022 Update	Comments
					<p>General Comments:</p> <p>Government of Alberta: <i>Water for Life</i> remains to be the overarching strategy for water in Alberta to ensure safe, secure drinking water, healthy aquatic ecosystems, and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy. The Government of Alberta continues to develop, adopt, and promote a watershed, risk-based, source-to-tap drinking water management approach that focuses on integrated watershed and land use planning, effective monitoring and compliance of point and non-point source pollution, efficient and effective water distribution systems, and healthy aquatic ecosystems.</p>
1	<p>New <i>Water for Life</i> Action Plan That the AWC collaborate with its partners and stakeholders to identify, by 2024, current work, information, challenges, and opportunities, that could be used to inform any development of a new 10-year action plan to achieve <i>Water for Life</i> goals and key directions and how the Water for Life partnerships can support plan implementation.</p>	Alberta Water Council	2024	Pending – to be completed	In 2021, a statement of opportunity was submitted by the GoA for the AWC to consider work in this area. The AWC approved launching a working group to scope terms of reference for a project team inform the GoA's efforts to develop the next iteration of the <i>Water for Life</i> Action Plan. This work is anticipated to wrap up in late 2022.
2	<p>Improved <i>Water for Life</i> Reviews That the AWC improve future <i>Water for Life</i> assessments by using performance indicators where applicable and feasible, and which may be adjusted from time to time, implementing a schedule of reporting and periodically producing more comprehensive reviews of individual Water for Life elements.</p>	Alberta Water Council	Ongoing long-term	Pending – to be completed	The previous <i>Water for Life</i> Implementation Review wrapped up in 2021. There has not been an opportunity to make progress on this yet. The next review will likely be initiated by the AWC in several years as is the custom and will include the indicators developed by the 2021 review and look at possible improvements.
3	<p>Small Systems Standards That the GoA finish and publicly release standards for non-municipal public drinking water systems that fall under the <i>Public Health Act</i> as guidance for system operators by the end of 2022.</p>	Government of Alberta	2022	Pending – to be completed	<p>AEP work is ongoing (jointly with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services) to inform the development and implementation of draft standards for micro waterworks systems.</p> <p>Interim guidelines were released July 26, 2021; https://open.alberta.ca/publications/public-health-guidelines-non-municipal-drinking-water Standard are in process with intention to complete by end of 2022.</p>
4	<p>Drinking Water Safety Plan Audits That the GoA improve the drinking water safety plan program for publicly regulated systems by adding a mandatory review and/or auditing function to the current process by 2024.</p>	Government of Alberta	2024	Pending - Uncertain	AEP will explore the scope of work in 2022 to inform a path forward. This work involves both compliance and drinking water operations specialization functions within AEP, and key considerations for system operators/owners.
5	<p>State of Drinking Water Report That the GoA, working with its drinking water partners, communicate by 2026 the state of drinking water and drinking water management systems (municipal, provincial, and federal) operating in Alberta, including roles and responsibilities, how risks are identified and mitigated, and where the public can get information about their local drinking water supply.</p>	Government of Alberta	2026	Pending - Uncertain	<p>AEP work has been initiated on the documentation of the department's Drinking Water Management System. This recommendation is being used to inform AEP discussions on content including gaps and opportunities.</p> <p>Collaboration and capacity across various AEP work units is an important consideration in implementing this recommendation as written.</p>
6	<p>One-water Approach That the AWC work with municipalities and other major water using sectors to provide the GoA advice (by 2024) on how management of source drinking water, wastewater, storm water, and water reuse can be improved by 1) identifying the policy or regulatory barriers and economic constraints to a "one-water" systems approach and 2) exploring the pros and cons of using green infrastructure to manage water quantity and quality in Alberta.</p>	Alberta Water Council	2024	Pending – to be completed	This project idea will be considered by the board at a future project selection meeting.

7	Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Review That the AWC strike a project team to examine and report on the state of Alberta's aquatic ecosystem health and its management (by 2022) and identify barriers and opportunities to improve capacity, governance, and accountability (by 2024) for achieving the <i>Water for Life</i> goal of healthy aquatic ecosystems.	Alberta Water Council	2024	Pending – to be completed	In 2021, this project idea was presented to the board to consider at a project section meeting. However, other priorities at that time were selected over this one. This project idea will be considered by the board at a future project selection meeting.
8	Water Use Data That the GoA improve our knowledge of water use by finding a mechanism to make licensed actual water use data publicly available by 2022.	Government of Alberta	2022	Pending – to be completed	AEP is in the process of transforming its regulatory system. As part of this transformation, a Digital Regulatory Assurance System (DRAS) is in development. The collection of water license data and the reporting of the actual use is a part of the project. AEP and AER are working together to discuss water license data collection, systems, and reporting.
9	Sustainable Economy That the AWC explore and provide advice to the GoA (by 2024) on what “sustainable economy” is in terms of Reliable Quality Water Supplies for a Sustainable Economy and 2) what the policy implications of various options, such as increased storage, improved efficiency, reduced administrative barriers, or sector water supply assistance programs, are to ensure this goal is achieved in the future, recognizing that solutions might look different in different regions and/or to different sectors.	Alberta Water Council	2024	Pending – to be completed	This project idea will be considered by the board at a future project selection meeting.
10	Improved modelling That the GoA and its partners work to improve water supply and demand modelling, including scenario-building and forecasting (particularly in light of population growth, economic development, cumulative effects, and climate variability), periodically updating the AWC and its partners on their learnings and how such information can inform policy and other decision makers (ongoing).	Government of Alberta	Ongoing long-term	Pending - Uncertain	The River Forecast Centre achieved a major milestone with the rollout of the Alberta River Forecast System. This centralized system allows river forecasters to view measured precipitation, river conditions, weather forecasts, and satellite imagery all at once in a single platform. It is estimated that the new system will enable river forecasters to produce flow forecasts 30% faster than before.
11	Preparedness That the GoA and its agencies (e.g., Alberta Emergency Management Agency) and the AWC continue to work with WPACs and municipalities to promote municipal flood and drought management and to develop planning, best practices, and other informative and user-friendly tools that improve community preparedness1 (ongoing).	Government of Alberta	Ongoing long-term	Implemented as written	<p>AEMA engages with municipalities and other stakeholders to support and enhance all aspects of emergency management across the province. AEMA offers municipalities, First Nations and Métis Settlements emergency management training, planning and exercise supports, and direct engagement and advice during and after an event to assist communities better prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. In addition, AEMA offers communities access to a free online planning tool and is engaged in the development of a provincial hazard identification and risk assessment tool intended to assist users in developing effective and sustainable mitigation strategies tailored for their communities.</p> <p>AEP continues to monitor potential flood and drought conditions and has undertaken activities to ensure the department is prepared to respond to water-related environmental emergencies.</p> <p>Improvements to the rivers.alberta.ca web app and AB Rivers mobile app will be ready for the 2022 flood season. These include the ability to issue flood advisories for smaller and more discrete river basins, as well as colour-coded lines for larger rivers. These changes will provide more precision when the River Forecast Centre is showing the areas under flood advisories.</p> <p>Financial Flood Risk Assessments are being produced for more communities. When complete, the relevant communities will be aware of their estimated financial exposure to floods of various sizes which will assist in prioritizing flood mitigation activity.</p> <p>Alberta continues to focus on working with communities/municipalities on the development of flood inundation and hazard maps for communities at risk. Study areas are determined by priority, and are continuously updated to ensure Albertans are as safe as possible.</p> <p>Engagement and education work is underway that generally supports this recommendation. For example, a new drought website was developed on Alberta.ca:</p>

					https://www.alberta.ca/drought.aspx . Additionally, several community-based engagements were conducted over the last year related to flood inundation hazard studies developed by AEP (Hazard studies for: Peace River, Upper Bow, Bow and Elbow River, Sheep River, Highwood River, Fort McMurray River, Siksika Bow River, Upper Red Deer River, Red Deer River, Priddis River, Medicine Hat River, North Saskatchewan River, Drumheller River, St Albert, Fort Macleod, Cardston, Fort Vermilion, Athabasca, Slave Lake, Pincher Creek, Camrose).
12	Education and Outreach That the GoA continue to work with <i>Water for Life</i> partners and other educators to improve the water literacy of Albertans by maintaining the Water for Life and Water Channel websites and ensuring they are active, accessible, and user-friendly and provide access to Water for Life documents, partners, potential funding sources, water-related programs, citizen science initiatives, etc. (ongoing with periodic updates to the AWC).	Government of Alberta	Ongoing long-term	Implemented – as written	AEP continues to support WPAC Education and Outreach staff on numerous watershed literacy projects including a watershed video series. The video series will be promoted across the province to educate Albertans on their watershed, watershed partners and stakeholders, key watershed management issues, and watershed stewardship. AEP also continues to maintain the Water for Life and Water Channel websites. Bow Habitat Station continues to play an important role in increasing the water literacy of Albertans. The program supports the three main goals of the Water for Life strategy with an emphasis on healthy aquatic ecosystems. Currently, Bow Habitat Station enhances water literacy through its interactive displays, hands on learning opportunities, and social media content. To increase the reach of water literacy messages across the province, Bow Habitat Station intends to develop a virtual program aligned with key messages identified in the <i>Water for Life</i> strategy.
13	Knowledge Integration That the GoA's water education, research, and monitoring and evaluation managers examine how they can better leverage and support each other's work and improve user-friendly communications, reporting to the Water for Life partners by 2022 on how their combined efforts and processes support an iterative and adaptive performance-based water and watershed management system.	Government of Alberta	2022	Pending to be completed	Ongoing participation in steering, operational and science technical committees by representatives from multiple AEP Divisions/branches is facilitating better awareness of the breadth of water work being undertaken in AEP. These formal connections are resulting in multi-group inputs into, for example, the adaptive development and refinement of surface water quality management frameworks as well as wider departmental uptake and application of new and/or improved evaluation techniques related to water quality/quantity data. In 2022, AEP is planning to enhance its water education efforts in conjunction with the AWC and other partners to coincide with the development of the new <i>Water for Life</i> Action Plan.
14	Partnerships Review That the AWC strike a project team to examine how the <i>Water for Life</i> partnership framework can be improved to contribute more effectively to water and watershed management in Alberta (with team work completed by 2022).	Alberta Water Council	2022	Pending to be completed	Through the ongoing AWC <i>Water for Life</i> Action Plan work, this topic will be examined and potential next steps will be proposed.
15	Advancing CEP That the AWC continue to provide the forum for advancing voluntary water conservation, efficiency, and productivity (CEP) through the work of the Water CEP Project Team, as needed (ongoing)	Alberta Water Council	Ongoing long-term	Pending – to be completed	This project idea will be considered by the board at a future project selection meeting. Building off the previous CEP project team's work that ended in 2017, the AWC will need to convene sectors either the end of 2022 or early 2023 to share their results.