



Alberta Water Council ... Update ...

Oldman Watershed Council
Stakeholder Meeting

28 September 2005
Lethbridge Public Library



Overview ...

💧 WHO,

- 💧 The AWC is a multi-stakeholder partnership reporting directly to the Minister of Environment,

💧 WHAT,

- 💧 The AWC's primary task is to monitor & steward implementation of the Water for Life strategy. The AWC also advises the Alberta Government, stakeholders & the public on effective water management practices & solutions to water issues [policy], & on priorities for water research.



Overview ...

- ◆ WHY ... Desired Outcomes,
 - ◆ Safe, secure drinking water supply,
 - ◆ Healthy aquatic ecosystems, and
 - ◆ Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.
- ◆ HOW ... Key Directions,
 - ◆ Knowledge & research,
 - ◆ Partnerships, and
 - ◆ Water conservation.



Who ...

💧 Industry ...

- 💧 Chemical & Petrochemical [Al Kennedy]
- 💧 Forestry [Rick Denton]
- 💧 Irrigation [David Hill]*
- 💧 Livestock [Larry Nolan]
- 💧 Mining [Judy Smith]
- 💧 Oil and Gas [Kevin Stashin]
- 💧 Power Generation [Mike Kelly]



Who ...

- ◆ Non-Government Organizations ...
 - ◆ Environmental [Margaret Reine]
 - ◆ Fishery Habitat Conservation [Ron Pearson]
 - ◆ Lake Environment Conservation [Jay White]
 - ◆ Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils [Bill Berzins]*
 - ◆ Wetland Conservation [Jonathan Thompson]



Who ...

◆ Alberta & Provincial Authorities

- ◆ Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development [John Knapp/John Donner]
- ◆ Alberta Economic Development [Tom Daniels]
- ◆ Alberta Energy [Ken Smith/Joe Miller]
- ◆ Alberta Environment [Ron Hicks/Peter Watson]**
- ◆ Alberta Health & Wellness [Nicholas Bayliss]
- ◆ Alberta Science & Research Authority [Linda Van Gastel]
- ◆ Alberta Sustainable Resource Development [Bob Fessenden/Brad Pickering]



Who ...

💧 Government

- 💧 Federal [Jim Vollmershausen]
- 💧 First Nations [Lisa King]*
- 💧 Large Urban [Al Maurer]
- 💧 Metis Settlements [Ray Wanuch/Gerald Cunningham]
- 💧 Rural [Bart Guyon/Bob Barss]
- 💧 Small Urban [Rick Quail]



Structure ...



The Council focused much of its attention this first year on building good working relationships among sectors, strengthening partnerships with other agencies, and identifying priority areas for Council attention and activity.



Activities ...

- 7 AWC Meetings in various locations,
 - Canmore, Edmonton [2], Calgary [2], Ft. McMurray, Lethbridge
- 5 Tours,
 - Wetlands, Calgary Waterworks, Bow Habitat Station, Albion Sands Mine [Shell], Southern Alberta Irrigation





Goals ...

- ◆ Steward implementation of the Water for Life strategy [Alberta's & the AWC's first reports expected soon].
- ◆ Provide advice to government, stakeholders and the public on water issue priorities and policies.
- ◆ Be an advocate for education and awareness.
- ◆ Be an advocate for water conservation (productivity & efficiency).
- ◆ Be a catalyst for collaboration.
- ◆ Advise government, stakeholders and the public on provincial research priorities.



Key Focus Areas ...

- Wetland policy, ✓
- Water research, ✓
- Water use efficiency, productivity & conservation, ✓
- Supporting the work of Watershed Planning & Advisory Councils, *
- Developing a long-term strategy & priorities, *
- Communications & marketing, *
- Describing the AWC's stewardship role and what that entails. ✓



What's Happening ...

- 💧 Wetland policy ...
 - 💧 Project team underway,
 - 💧 Develop & integrate wetland policies for settled & unsettled areas,
 - 💧 Initial consultations mid-October,
 - 💧 Policy framework,
 - 💧 Public consultations in fall 2006,
 - 💧 Refine, recommend to Alberta.



What's Happening ...

💧 Water research ...

- 💧 Review of Alberta research capacity [primarily academic, but includes government & private]
- 💧 Initial consultations,
- 💧 Draft Water Research Strategy,
- 💧 Focus on areas of moving science out of the lab onto the landscape – applied research,
- 💧 Move from projects to programs,
- 💧 Sustainable long-term funding [\$10 million/year?].



What's Happening ...

- 💧 Water use efficiency, productivity & conservation
 - 💧 Lots of work here, many of the core issues,
 - 💧 Value of water to the economy & quality of life [includes things like ecological goods & services],
 - 💧 Evaluation, analysis of effectiveness of economic instruments,
 - 💧 Promoting development of sector conservation plans, within watershed context,
 - 💧 Provincial scope, watershed application.



What's Happening ...

- ◆ Describing the AWC's stewardship role & what that entails ...
 - ◆ Independent review of province's performance under Water for Life Strategy,
 - ◆ Providing information & contact between the AWC & external agencies, groups, etc.,
 - ◆ Evolving website, on-line information,
 - ◆ First annual reports expected soon!



What's Happening ...

- ◆ Developing a long-term strategy & priorities ...
 - ◆ Strategic planning underway, commenced earlier this month,
 - ◆ Focus on priority areas [the water landscape is diverse, more to do than time to do it],
 - ◆ Plans to move AWC into an arms-length organization, increased independence,
 - ◆ Provide leadership, take ownership, drive to excellence.



What's Happening ...

- ◆ Communications & marketing ...
 - ◆ High need for public education, information,
 - ◆ Initial work focus on roles of AWC and province,
 - ◆ Need to branch out and support WPACs,
 - ◆ Key to success, lots of work yet to do in scoping the range of activities.



What's Happening ...

- ◆ Supporting the work of Watershed Planning & Advisory Councils ...
 - ◆ Begin by building regular opportunities for dialogue,
 - ◆ Need to identify what WPACs most need that can best be delivered by the AWC,
 - ◆ Access to knowledge, information, research,
 - ◆ Capacity building, support, resources,
 - ◆ Recognize that many of the real “rubber hits the road issues” will be experienced in watersheds ... high need to ensure success!



The Road Ahead ...

- 💧 It's ours to determine,
- 💧 Personal observation ... there has never been a better time for people with interests in water to forge their collective future,
- 💧 Need to take risk, move out of our long-held positions in favour of our interests.
- 💧 Lots of work, lots of commitment, lots of FUN!