

Lake Management Project Team Terms of Reference

Approved by the Alberta Water Council on: October 30, 2014.

CONTEXT:

- The lake management initiative originated from a Statement of Opportunity (SOO) brought forward to the Council by the Alberta Lake Management Society. The Council identified this initiative as a potential project at the October 2013 board meeting and established a working group to further define the scope of a potential project.
- Alberta's lakes exhibit natural variability in trophic status with some being nutrient rich and others nutrient poor and less productive. Lakes in the central region, where anthropogenic pressures are arguably higher and projected to increase, are generally naturally eutrophic and further nutrient inputs could exacerbate existing problems. Human influence on watershed land use and lake ecosystems in the last 100 years has altered the nature of some Albertan lakes, and is evident in scientific data and repeated anecdotally from those living near these lakes. Influences include control of water levels, diversion of water, changing the land cover and use in the lake's drainage basin, overfishing, urbanizing the lakeshore and climate change. Our finite lake resource is under pressure.
- As growth continues the public expectation of adequate protection of those attributes associated with the Canadian lake experience (good water quality, good sport fishing, safe contact recreation, pleasing aesthetic values, and healthy aquatic ecosystems) will also continue.
- There are two major challenges to effective lake management in Alberta: a) ensuring sufficient information on the ecological characteristics of any given lake to effectively inform management, and b) defining management roles and responsibilities. There is an opportunity for a proactive, coordinated approach to lake monitoring, evaluation, reporting and management. This comes with the understanding that a watershed approach to the development of lake management plans is an effective, supported and current approach in Alberta.
- The Council uses a multi-stakeholder consensus based process to provide recommendations to advance the three goals of the *Water for Life* Strategy. This project aligns with advancing the three goals by incorporating the Council's multi-stakeholder approach in the development of effective cross-sector solutions.
- The Project Team will operate in a manner that is consistent with the rules, policies and procedures adopted by the Alberta Water Council, including the use of consensus to make decisions in a multi-stakeholder process.

STRATEGIC INTENT (GOAL):

The purpose of this initiative is to provide recommendations for improved lake management in Alberta to support achievement of *Water for Life* goals.

OBJECTIVES:

- Document and assess the current state of lake management planning and governance (e.g., roles and responsibilities) in Alberta.
- Identify gaps, redundancies and opportunities for improvements in lake management.
- Develop recommendations toward effective lake management in Alberta, including roles and responsibilities.

KEY TASKS:

- Develop a work plan of main steps and expected products or outcomes for each task.
- Develop a list of what lake management includes.
- Summarize the current state of lake management in Alberta, including: a) examples of management planning/plans; b) monitoring/research, evaluation and reporting; c) implementation of lake and watershed management plans and practices; and, d) education and awareness initiatives.
 - Engage key groups as needed.
 - Consider current and evolving policy and legislation.
 - Engage experts as needed (e.g., to address concerns regarding legal aspects of lake management).
- Identify the current roles and responsibilities of the main players in lake management activities or components.
- Consider current lake management approaches and practices from other jurisdictions (e.g., presentations from informed experts).
- Identify gaps and redundancies in the existing lake management system, and highlight opportunities for improving lake management in Alberta.
- Based on the information and evaluation above, develop a draft approach for lake management.
 - Some factors to consider in lake management include: the aquatic ecosystem; major land use types; activities in the watershed; potential influences (including cumulative impacts) on the health of lakes; the hydrology of the area surrounding the lake; lake water quality and quantity, including trends; uses of lakes and reservoirs; lake-specific objectives or desired outcomes; economic and governance requirements; alignment of lake and associated watershed planning with overlapping plans (e.g., Land Use Framework plans and municipal development plans); and the role of existing legislation, policy, guidelines (e.g., *Water Act*, *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*, *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*, *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*, *Municipal Government Act* and GoA policy on “Consultation with First Nations on Land and Natural Resource Management”).

- Organize a facilitated workshop with key stakeholder representatives involved in lake management.
 - The workshop will be used as a forum to solicit feedback on the draft approach for lake management, to inform the team’s development of final recommendations.
- Provide updates to the Alberta Water Council as needed.
- Provide recommendations to Council.

TIMELINES and DELIVERABLES:

- Present initial findings on the current state of lake management in Alberta.....June 2015
- Hold a facilitated workshop bringing together stakeholders involved in lake management (consider opportunities to combine with related events).....Fall 2015
- Draft final report recommendations.....March 2016
- Final report recommendations.....June 2016

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP:

Industry:

- Irrigation
- Cropping
- Livestock
- Forestry
- Oil and Gas
- Tourism and Recreation

Non-Governmental Organizations:

- Environmental NGO
- Fish Habitat Conservation
- Lake Environment Conservation
- Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils

Government:

- Small Urban
- Rural
- First Nations
- Metis Settlements

Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities:

- Aboriginal Relations
- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Alberta Innovates – Energy and Environment Solutions
- Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
- Municipal Affairs
- Alberta Health
- Culture and Tourism

BUDGET:

The Working Group estimates a total budget of \$96,000 to complete the project, broken down as follows:

Core Funding Costs (covered by Alberta Water Council):

Project Team Support	\$ 70,000
Hosting	\$ 5,000
Communications Support	\$ 6,000

Project Funding Costs (covered by stakeholders):

A facilitated workshop bringing together lake management stakeholders	\$ 15,000
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