

Draft NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Released

Yellowknife, November 4, 2009 – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada are pleased to release the draft NWT Water Stewardship Strategy.

The draft Strategy promotes an ecosystem-based approach to integrated watershed management in order to improve water stewardship in the NWT, and reflects the deep and fundamental relationship between residents and the waters of the NWT. To be most effective, the Strategy recognizes the importance of combining the best available local, traditional and scientific knowledge.

“As stewards of water we have an obligation and a responsibility to adopt more sustainable water management practices”, said Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Michael Miltenberger. “Together with our water partners, we have created a draft Strategy that will result in more effective water stewardship to ensure NWT waters will remain clean, abundant and productive for all time.”

The NWT Water Stewardship Strategy is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to the responsible management of water resources flowing both within the NWT and from other jurisdictions. The draft Strategy is intended to improve decision-making processes, information sharing, and communication among all parties involved in water stewardship activities in the NWT.

“Stewardship is a shared responsibility. To effectively look after our water resources we must work together at all levels,” said Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. “Clean water is fundamental to life and essential to the social, cultural and economic well-being of NWT residents. The development of the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy provides a unique opportunity for multiple parties to work together towards a common goal.”

As representatives on the steering committee guiding this initiative, Aboriginal governments have played a key role in the development process to date. Additionally, other governments, regional organizations, communities, environmental non-governmental organizations, co-management boards and agencies, industry and residents have contributed their voice to the development of the draft Strategy.

The draft Strategy respects Aboriginal and treaty rights as well as rights and processes set out in settled land claim and self-government agreements.

By actively participating in the upcoming engagement process, residents of the NWT can help define the future of territorial water. Public engagement opportunities will take place between November 2009 and March 2010. Input collected during this period will inform the final version of the document, which has a target completion date of summer 2010.

For the full text of the Strategy, visit the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' website at <http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/>

For more information, contact:

Andrew Matthews

Communications Officer

Office of the Premier and Executive Council

(867) 669-2304