



Peel River (INAC)

The next step is to begin the broad dialogue within the NWT that is necessary to shape the discussion required to develop a strategy and to guide its implementation. Northern voices must be heard. ENR and INAC are committed to working with all parties in the NWT which have an interest in sound water management. Only in this way, we will be able to create an NWT Water Resources Management Strategy that we will be proud to call our own.

For more information, the rolling draft of *Towards an NWT Water Resources Management Strategy - A Discussion Paper on Strategy Development* document can be viewed at www.enr.gov.nt.ca.



Children in Ulukhaktok (INAC)

CHARTING A COURSE

Seeking an NWT consensus on what water resources management in the NWT should look like is essential if we are to collectively manage our water resources effectively today and for future generations. The discussion paper is a proposed approach intended to spark discussions regarding an NWT Water Resources Management Strategy.



“With each project approved, the growing demands on water and the environment and the absence of any sustainable solution weighs more heavily on the people of the North.”

Bill Erasmus
NWT Regional Chief, Assembly of First Nations

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Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada

TOWARDS A WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE NWT



Nahanni (Kane)



P. Vecsei

WHY DO WE NEED TO DEVELOP A WATER STRATEGY FOR THE NWT?

Clean and abundant water resources has always been a basic expectation of Northwest Territories (NWT) residents. *Northern Voices, Northern Waters - Towards a Water Resources Management Strategy for the Northwest Territories* is a discussion paper that sets out a proposed approach for developing an NWT Water Resources Management Strategy that will help ensure our water remains healthy today and into the future. This approach is based on the many issues that impact the managing of our watersheds - at the local, regional, national and global levels.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), as represented by Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), along with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) recognizes that the sound management of northern water resources is a high priority for Northerners and Canadians.

Pressures on water from within the NWT and from neighbouring jurisdictions continue to increase. Residents of the NWT must collectively play a greater role in understanding the significance of current and emerging water management issues and in influencing and shaping the future direction of water resources management.

A PROPOSED STRATEGY TO MANAGE THE WATER RESOURCES OF THE NWT



Big Lake (J. Skelton/GNWT)



Dettah Ice Road (C. Scott/GNWT)

A NORTHERN VOICE FOR GUIDING WATER MANAGEMENT

Northerners have already provided much advice and comment on the importance of sound management of our water resources. Aboriginal leaders and other Northerners have spoken clearly and emphatically about their concerns and expectations on many occasions, most recently at the Water Wise Conference (2007) and the Keepers of the Water Gatherings (2006, 2007).

Our 'northern voice' must be clear and unambiguous when it comes to water management in the NWT; it must be equally clear when it comes to our expectations regarding management of waters entering the NWT. The interests of people across the territory need to be reflected in the development and implementation of a strategy. It must be a strategy created by Northerners, for Northerners.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Commonly, water strategies in other jurisdictions are guided by statements of principle. During Water Wise Conferences, Keepers of the Water Gatherings and other forums, participants have articulated a number of principles which could guide the development and implementation of an NWT Water Resources Management Strategy. These include:

- Watersheds - The Essential Unit
- Surface and Groundwater Connections
- Sustainability
- Renewability
- Multiple Uses/Values
- Joint Production of Benefits
- Values and Valuation
- Treaty and Aboriginal Rights, Land Claims, Water Rights and Ownership
- Maximization of Social Well-being
- Fairness and Equity
- Integrated Management
- Natural Capital Accounting for Water
- Risk and Uncertainty
- Adaptive Management



Falls at Kuskula Lake (INAC)

ASSESSING WATER NEEDS

A comprehensive water resources management strategy could address some or all of the following, and more:

- Human Needs (for survival)
- Ecosystem Needs (for sustainable and healthy ecosystems)
- Traditional Cultural Needs (to maintain traditional uses of the waters)
- Economic Needs (for sustainable development)



"We know that if we don't look after the land, the animals and the water, then the land, the animals and the water won't look after us."

Hon. Michael Miltenberger
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources

LAND CLAIM AGREEMENTS

The strategy must conform to all Aboriginal and treaty rights, land claim agreements, and self-government agreements. Various NWT land claims agreements set out the specific rights and responsibilities of Aboriginal governments and resource management boards with respect to water management.

COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

There are many NWT organizations that share responsibility for water management, including Aboriginal, territorial and federal governments, regional organizations, communities, environmental non-governmental organizations, boards and agencies, businesses and interested residents. These agencies and organizations must be involved in all aspects of a strategy, from its development to implementation.

ELEMENTS THAT MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN A STRATEGY

- The Purpose of an NWT Water Resources Management Strategy
- The Evolution of an NWT Water Resources Management Strategy
- A Northern Voice for Guiding Water Management
- Fundamental Principles
- The Dimensions of Northern Water Management - Assessing Water Needs
- Water Management Decision - Making - Supporting Processes
- Monitoring and Sustainability Accounting Current and Emerging Issues
- Moving Forward



Sharples Lake (INAC)