



ENR Update: Implementing the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy

The NWT Water Stewardship Strategy (Strategy), released in May 2010, links current and potential NWT water initiatives through a common vision, goals and approaches, to improve collaborative water stewardship in the NWT. A five-year Action Plan for collaborative implementation of the Strategy is now available.

Partnerships, a core component of the implementation of the Strategy, are being strengthened to implement the identified Keys to Success. Partnership with Aboriginal Governments and communities continues to be a high priority of the Strategy.

Internal NWT Partnerships

1. The Forum for Leadership on Water (FLOW) hosted national water experts in Yellowknife in January 2011 to provide advice on how to successfully implement the Strategy; all NWT water partners were invited to participate.
2. Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) and Ecology North hosted public events such as a water-themed arts contest for school aged youth across the NWT and the screening of water related films in Yellowknife to celebrate World Water Day/Canada Water Week.
3. A Scientific Training and Capacity Building workshop with NWT water partners and Wilfrid Laurier University took place to discuss water research and monitoring training and NWT community capacity building.
4. Ecology North hosted workshops on scientific education and training in the North and on Communities and Climate Change.
5. Community fishing events were held in Fort Resolution and Fort Smith in June 2011 to conduct sampling for a new regional fish health study. Monitoring training will be available to community members.
6. A 16 member Slave River and Delta Partnership was formed last year to support and coordinate community-based monitoring efforts.

7. ENR/Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) hosted a community workshop in Fort Smith on potential aquatic ecosystem health indicators for the Slave River and Slave River Delta.
8. ENR, on behalf of the Slave River and Delta Partnership, secured funding under the NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP) to support a State of the Slave River and Delta report and vulnerability assessment. Sediment sampling in the Slave River Delta will also occur in partnership with the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University.
9. ENR/AANDC purchased water quality monitoring equipment for community-based monitoring programs in the NWT.
10. ENR submitted a funding request under the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) program to support our efforts related to climate change and cumulative effects of contaminants on freshwater.
11. ENR contracted AECOM Consultants to establish a searchable list and calendar of possible funding sources for community-based monitoring. The calendar will be shared with communities and partners this fall.

External Partnerships

1. ENR engaged partners such as the University of Alberta and University of New Brunswick to develop curriculum, learning tools and provide training on water quality sampling and fish monitoring to NWT individuals involved in community-based monitoring.
2. ENR partnered with the University of Saskatchewan to study the health of fish in the Slave River and the Slave River Delta.
3. ENR is collaborating with Trent University, Sir Sandford Fleming College, Aurora College, and the University of Saskatchewan on Source Water Protection initiatives.
4. ENR engaged experts from the University of Laval to help better understand implications of British Columbia's Site C hydroelectric dam on the downstream ecosystems in the Mackenzie River Basin.
5. ENR/AANDC sit on the GNWT-Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) Science Committee, working with WLU to represent NWT interests in research and capacity building/training decision making.
6. ENR/AANDC continue to participate in national water fora such as the Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB), the Canadian Council for Ministers of the Environment (CCME), the Council of the Federation (COF), Water Stewardship Council, and FLOW.
7. ENR/AANDC are engaged in the development of a world class aquatic monitoring program for the Alberta oil sands region.
8. ENR/AANDC participates in the Peace-Athabasca Delta Ecological Monitoring Program to work toward monitoring the health of the aquatic ecosystem at a regional level, including monitoring impacts from oil sands development, hydro development and climate change.