

Water Research: An Alberta Priority

Population growth, expansion of agriculture, energy, forestry and other industries, and climate change all present challenges to Alberta's aquatic ecosystems. Addressing the protection, allocation and management of water resources and water systems requires a co-ordinated effort among water users, managers and researchers.

The Government of Alberta's \$30 million two-year commitment to begin implementing the Water Research Strategy will help in determining the most effective ways to gain greater understanding of the resource and how best to use it. Through multi-disciplinary research and innovation teams, Alberta will develop and implement plans to fill knowledge gaps and develop and assess technologies to meet the need for safe, secure drinking water, healthy surface water, healthy groundwater and reliable quality water.

Water - For Now, For Forever

Water is critical to human health and to Alberta's long term prosperity and environmental sustainability.

Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability is based on three key goals, or outcomes:

- Safe, secure drinking water supply
- Healthy aquatic ecosystems
- Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy

The Alberta Science and Research Authority (ASRA), in partnership with the Alberta Water Council, led the development of a new Water Research Strategy to support *Water For Life* by ensuring the province's water managers and decision makers have access to international calibre research and information that is specific to Alberta.

The Water Research Strategy is not about a new building or laboratory. Rather, it provides a framework for collaborative, integrated water research.

ASRA consulted more than 100 individuals representing research institutions, water basin councils, stewardship groups, industry, environmental organizations, technology commercialization agencies and government.

This new approach will build on the excellent capability in water research and development that is already in place in Alberta, and extend the network of national and international relationships.

Sustained funding will support a broader approach to providing science based information on which to base decisions and actions needed for effective water management in Alberta.

For a copy of ASRA's Water Research Strategy, visit:
www.asra.ab.ca

For more information about Water for Life, visit:
www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca

For information on the Alberta Ingenuity Fund, visit:
<http://www.albertaingenuity.ca>

Water Research Needs

To make sound management decisions about Alberta's water resources today and in future, we need better information, best practices and technologies now.

Water research encompasses an enormous array of questions. Among the areas to be examined are:

- Contamination prevention
- Drinking water safety
- Quantity and flow of both surface and groundwater
- Wastewater treatment, water conservation
- Flood and drought forecasting

Under the new framework, different research teams will be able to work together on specific questions, and the diverse ideas and approaches will strengthen the research process.

Initial work will focus on understanding groundwater resources and connections with surface water; expanding water treatment technologies and systems to ensure public health; and understanding and measuring aquatic ecosystem health.

The Water Research Strategy supports a number of government strategies, including Water For Life and the 20 year plan, Today's Opportunities, Tomorrow's Promise: A Strategic Plan for the Government of Alberta.

Innovation and Science is working with Alberta Ingenuity to co-ordinate implementation of the Water Research Strategy so as to build on the scientific knowledge gained to date through the Alberta Ingenuity Centre for Water Research, the Alberta Research Council, our post-secondary institutions, industry, utility companies, municipalities and other Alberta government departments.

Alberta Ingenuity will also co-ordinate provincial water research with national and international efforts.