

**Integrated Watershed Management Plan  
Regional Advisory Committees  
Phase 1 Terms of Reference****April 2006**

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**Introduction and Background**

The purpose of this document is to provide a Terms of Reference for the Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) that will be formed during Phase 1 of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) process. This Terms of Reference and the roles of the RACs will be re-evaluated at the start of Phase 2 of the planning process to allow for flexibility in the composition and function of these committees.

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) is preparing an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) for the mainstem sub-watersheds of the North Saskatchewan River watershed in Alberta. The goal of the IWMP is to prepare a plan that will guide the protection, maintenance and restoration of the North Saskatchewan watershed that balances environmental, social and economic needs particular to each of the sub-watershed regions and that follows Alberta Environment's *Framework for Water Management Planning*. A Terms of Reference for the IWMP can be found on the NSWA's website: [www.nswa.ab.ca](http://www.nswa.ab.ca).

The process for preparing the IWMP has three phases:

Phase 1: Watershed Characterization and Plan initiation (2004 – 2007)

Phase 2: Plan Preparation and Approval (2008 – 2010)

Phase 3: Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (2010 – 2020)

In Phase 1 the public and stakeholders will be involved in prioritization of issues in sharing information about watersheds and watershed management through Regional Advisory Committees (RACs). RACs are multi-stakeholder groups that will provide advice and direction to the NSWA in the preparation and implementation of the IWMP. RACs will include representation from a broad range of stakeholder groups. Representatives of established organizations participating in a RAC will be accountable to the organizations and sectors that they represent. There will be three RACs based on geographic regions within the North Saskatchewan watershed (see "Geographic Scope" below).

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the RACs is to identify issues, and provide recommendations and advice to the IWMP Steering Committee on watershed management for the region.

RACs are responsible for:

- Verifying watershed challenges and opportunities specific to their particular watershed region;
- Identifying what types of information and knowledge will be needed to address challenges and opportunities and providing feedback on work that will be undertaken by any Technical Advisory Committee of the IWMP;
- Leading and participating in Phase 1 consultation and engagement activities with the stakeholders and public within their watershed region.
- Auditing the plan process and its outcomes to ensure that the process is salient to the RAC and broader public within sub-watershed region.

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**Geographic Scope**

Three RAC's are proposed based on the geographic regions (see Figure 1) within the North Saskatchewan watershed in Alberta as follows:

- **Headwaters RAC** representing Cline, Clearwater, Ram, Brazeau, Modeste sub-watersheds
- **Central RAC** representing Sturgeon, Strawberry, White Earth, Beaverhill sub-watersheds
- **Lakeland RAC** representing Frog, Vermillion, Monnery, sub-watersheds

**Committee Composition**

RACs will be composed of residents or organizations in the sub-watershed region from industry, local and regional government<sup>1</sup>, Aboriginal organizations and communities, tourism and economic development agencies, public health organizations, education and research organizations, conservation/ environmental non-government organizations, community watershed stewardship groups and other interested parties (accountable to a defined group of people).

**Committee Selection**

The NSWA Manager and/or IWMP Coordinator will solicit applications by advertising and direct mail/contact and through information and consultation activities conducted for this purpose. Interested individuals will be asked to submit an application form that will gather information on the stakeholder category they wish to represent, their contact information and affiliation. The application must be supported by three letters of support, one of which must be from another organization within the sector that they wish to represent and another from their host organization (if applicable). If there is more than one applicant for a particular stakeholder sector the applicants may choose to either make a choice amongst themselves, or to have the sector representative chosen by the IWMP Steering Committee based on information from the application form. The number of committee members will be at the discretion of the IWMP Steering Committee.

**Commitment**

RAC members are asked to complete a two-year term (to the end of Phase 1) and report back regularly to the organizations and sectors they represent and will be asked to re-state their commitment at the beginning of each year. If there is a change in the situation of the Committee member – i.e., not re-elected, change in employment, etc. then they must notify the Committee.

If a Regional Advisory Committee member misses 3 consecutive meetings (this does not include those times that an alternate is sent), they be asked to leave the Committee by letter from the NSWA Board of Directors.

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<sup>1</sup> When government boundaries overlap more than one of the RAC boundaries, governments are responsible for deciding whether they want to participate in one or more of those RACs.

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**Scope of Communications**

Spokespersons for NSWA activities are the NSWA Manager and the Chairperson of the NSWA Board of Directors. RACs should nominate a spokesperson(s) who will be able to speak publicly about RAC activities and recommendations as required. All other RAC members may speak publicly about the IWMP, but only as representatives of their own organizations – not as representatives of their RAC, nor of the NSWA.

**RAC Meetings**

A chairperson will be elected from the RAC membership to lead RAC meetings. RAC members must be prepared to attend monthly meetings in an accessible venue located within the sub-watershed region. Working with the RAC Chairperson, the IWMP Coordinator or their designate will prepare and circulate meeting agendas one week prior to the meeting date. Meeting minutes will record decisions, outcomes and actions and will be circulated to committee members in a timely manner. The approved final minutes along with the agenda will be available for the public to view via the NSWA website. Members of the public are welcome to attend RAC meetings as observers. Decisions and recommendations will be made using the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) consensus model. The NSWA will provide meeting support services (facilitator, recorder, etc.) as required.

**Resources**

The RACs, working together with the IWMP Coordinator, may call upon the resources of the NSWA membership or other funding bodies for operating costs to support the IWMP process. Reimbursement of travel expenses of \$0.41/kilometer (if traveling more than 30 kilometers to and from a meeting) will be provided to each RAC member belonging to a community or non-profit organization that does not normally cover travel expenses. Receipts for meals, hotel costs, etc. should be submitted to the NSWA following the meeting. Carpooling is encouraged.

