



Working together to ensure and sustain

- a safe water supply,
- a healthy environment
- and a prosperous economy



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The next AWC board meeting will be held Thursday March 20, 2013 in Calgary.

New Communication Tools

Two new tools are being developed as part of the Council's Communication Strategy: webinars and fact sheets.

Webinars

A series of webinars is planned to increase common understanding around projects that have been recently selected as an area of Council focus or have potential to be selected in the future. More general water management issues will also be webinar topics, as will sector-specific water issues and the processes for making management decisions.

The Council recently decided to look at aquatic invasive species and that was the topic of the first webinar held on September 19, 2013. You can access it [here](#).

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THE WATERFALL

Director Profile of Jason Unger, Environmental Sector

Jason Unger is a lawyer with the Environmental Law Centre (ELC), an organization with a mission of seeing that laws, policies and legal processes ensure a healthy environment for future generations. He received his law degree from Dalhousie University, where he obtained a specialization in environmental law, and was subsequently admitted to the



Alberta Bar in 2002. After articling in Calgary he practiced in general litigation, regulatory and administrative law and then went on to work for the Alberta Wilderness Association. Jason also has a biology degree from the University of Winnipeg, which gave him an opportunity to conduct field work on bats in Central America and Northeastern British Columbia. Jason sits on the Boards of the Water Matters Society of Alberta

and the Land Stewardship Centre of Canada. Joining the ELC in 2006 he focuses on areas

Fact Sheets

Fact sheets will facilitate the flow of information to a wider audience within each of the Council sectors. The first set of fact sheets, based on recently completed projects, is now on the Council website. Future fact sheets will examine recently completed projects as well as water topics in general. To view our fact sheets, please visit our [website](#).

New work for the Council

The project *A Strategic Approach for Water Literacy; Education and Outreach in Alberta* is beginning this month as a working group develops terms of reference. Watch for more information on this exciting work in the next issue!

AWC Presentation Opportunity

Would you like to raise awareness in your group or sector about the Council? Staff would be happy to present information about how the Council works, including an update on its projects, and to respond to questions. If you are interested in such a presentation, please contact Council Staff or email info@awchome.ca

Council's Newsletter

The Council's newsletter will arrive at your inbox three times per year, shortly after each board meeting, providing a quick update for board members and other interested stakeholders. Comments and suggestions are welcome, so please tell us what you think. Email your feedback to info@awchome.ca. We look forward to hearing from you!

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of water law, species at risk and wildlife law, conservation tools on private lands and administrative law.

Jason is a director for the Environmental sector on the Council. He has a wealth of experience on Council teams including Water Policy Issues and Gaps, Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems, Provincial Ecological Aquatic Criteria for Health, Water for Life Implementation Review and, most recently, Non-Point Source Pollution.

Jason feels that the Council represents a novel and innovative approach to bringing a diverse spectrum of water interests and perspectives to the table. "As a collaborative process I see lots of value in bringing people together and finding areas of common interest. At the same time, the existing legal rights of parties around the table can create challenges in developing consensus-based policy recommendations."

He thinks there is a need for processes like the Water Council, but recognizes that using collaboration to deal with contentious issues does not always lead to consensus. "We have seen this to a degree within the Council itself. The consensus-based decision making process has both advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side it aims to bring people to a common understanding and agreement about how to move forward on a given issue or recommended policy, which leads to policies that are more likely to have political support (although the seats around the Water Council are still limited). On the negative side, particularly where there are likely to be costs to achieve a desired environmental outcome, consensus decision making tends to lead to more processes, which may or may not result in a better environment. Consensus decision-making involves negotiation and, sometimes, tradeoffs on specific issues, but it must be recognized that a compromised environment should not be acceptable."

For anyone considering volunteering on one of the Council initiatives, Jason would tell them to get engaged, to recognize that tradeoffs are part of building consensus and to come armed with as much science as can be mustered. Also, he would encourage them to recognize that words matter. Although this may cause longer, more drawn out discussions, the result will be a fuller understanding of the issues and perspectives around the table.

"I think the Council has done well at formulating recommendations in the structure and climate in which we operate. The next challenge for Council is to see policy applied and translated into environmental gains, and this will require money and commitment." In the future, Jason hopes that we have a regulatory system that is proactive in protecting water quality and quantity and in sustaining aquatic biodiversity and ecology.



THE CONFLUENCE

Aquatic Invasive Species Team gets the ball rolling

The Aquatic Invasive Species project team was launched following the June Board meeting. The purpose of this project is to identify gaps and opportunities for improving awareness, communication and coordination of activities by stakeholders in Alberta that are working to prevent and manage the threats of aquatic invasive species (AIS). This work will include a review of other jurisdictions' prevention and management strategies;



how their stakeholders are working together to achieve shared outcomes and how these strategies can be adapted or improved for Alberta.

The team had its first meeting at the beginning of October. The team agreed that conducting a survey of stakeholders



to develop an understanding of the current state of AIS prevention and management in Alberta would be a key piece of its work. The survey is expected

to be undertaken during December and January. The team will also engage a consultant to explore AIS prevention and management systems of other jurisdictions and identify potential strategies that could be useful for Alberta.

Further information on this team's work can be found on the Council's [website](#).

Riparian Team Wraps Up



The Riparian Land Conservation and Management Project Team presented its final report and recommendations to Council at the October board meeting. The team was established to “enhance knowledge and provide recommendations for effective conservation and management of riparian lands in support of Water for Life goals.” To accomplish this

goal, the team commissioned a report titled “Riparian Lands in Alberta – Current state, conservation tools, and management approaches” which can be found on the Council's website. The team's analysis of this report, discussions with Council sectors and its own research findings led to 13 recommendations for improving riparian land conservation and management in Alberta.

Given the importance of riparian lands to Albertans and concerns that riparian lands are being degraded with increasing growth pressures, the project team centered its recommendations on actions that would fill knowledge and management needs at multiple scales.

The team recognized that improved riparian land management could be achieved most effectively through alignment and coordination with cumulative effects management, integrated resource management, regional planning and watershed planning. This approach blends well with research that suggests effective riparian land management includes managing these lands as components of a larger ecosystem. Strong leadership is needed to ensure riparian management stays at the forefront of land and water planning. Other important needs are developing a provincial level vision and desired outcomes for riparian land conservation and management, and ensuring that policies, strategies and initiatives at all scales are aligned toward a common outcome.

Along with setting the context for effective governance, the report identified gaps that hinder effective and coordinated riparian management. One key gap was the acceptance and use of a common definition. The team developed an ecological definition that clearly identifies riparian lands characteristics.

The report also discusses opportunities to develop consistent and integrated

methods to delineate and map riparian lands and assess their health and function.

Consequently, the team stressed the need for a baseline “state of riparian lands” report.



The team's final report notes the importance of continuing a coordinated effort to develop stronger, more effective partnerships among relevant jurisdictions and stakeholders, each of which plays a key role in riparian conservation and management. Improvements can be achieved through a combination of education, use of riparian best or beneficial management practices and support for stewardship efforts on public and

private lands.

The Riparian project report and recommendations will be posted shortly to the Council's [website](#). Way to go Riparian team members!

Team Members: Norine Ambrose, Rick Bonar, Greg Bowie, Jim Fujikawa, Al Kemmere, Tony Machacek, Sharon McKinnon, Donna Mendelsohn, Julienne Morissette, Stephanie Neufeld, Norma Posada, Karen Raven, Martin Shields, Judy Stewart.

Project Managers: Alesha Hill, Meredith Walker

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WATER PIPES

Symposium Committee on Water Reuse continues its work

The Council is planning a symposium to explore water reuse for household, municipal and industrial applications. The event titled Re-Fresh: The confluence of ideas and opportunities on water reuse will bring participants together to share global water reuse knowledge, challenges and solutions to inform the potential development of responsive water reuse policy in Alberta.

The two day event will be held in Calgary at the Hotel Arts on June 25 & 26, 2014. The symposium committee has identified three themes to highlight opportunities and barriers related to water reuse:

- Business and Environmental Sustainability
- Technology and Innovation
- How to Apply Water Reuse in Alberta

Two sub-committees have also begun their work this fall. One will develop a sponsorship plan and package to assist with funding the event and the other will provide input on promoting and marketing the Symposium. The committee is now engaging speakers and working to finalize the event program. For more information about the symposium check out the event's [website](#)!



Great contributors to Council work move on

Each fall, the Council celebrates and recognizes directors and alternates who have stepped down from the Board over the past year. This year, we gratefully acknowledge the hard work and dedication of:

- Elaine Bellamy
- Lars DePauw
- Colin Jeffares
- Tara Payment

- Judy Stewart
- Bev Yee

We hope that you all keep in touch and continue to encourage our work from wherever you are!

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