

Bow Basin Watershed Management Plan (BBWMP)

Overview Fact Sheet

Why is a watershed management plan being developed?



Managing and protecting the aquatic environment within watersheds is a complex task. In 2005, recognizing this complexity and the need for a management tool that would align resource decisions across sectors and jurisdictions, the Bow River Basin Council (BRBC) initiated the development of a watershed management plan for the Bow Basin to be prepared in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

The Plan is intended to 1) protect and enhance the watershed, 2) recommend changes in public awareness and education, public policy, practice and regulation, and 3) serve as a catalyst for proactive, voluntary action by land, water and resource managers.

What is the focus of Phase One?

Based on the BRBC's assessment of outcomes, planning priorities, and available resources, Phase One of the BBWMP will focus largely on issues of **surface water quality**. However due to linkages between water quality and other ecosystem components, the scope of the plan is not limited to water quality, and may include recommendations (both regulatory and non-regulatory) on riparian areas, source protection, water quantity, land use planning, groundwater, wetlands, biodiversity, recreation, industry, and others. The scope of BBWMP Phase Two has yet to be determined.

What are the specific objectives for Phase One?

Based on the desired outcomes and identification of critical areas (the geographic portion of the watershed that is having a significant impact on the watershed) by the BBWMP Technical Committee, Phase One of the BBWMP has the following objectives:

- ❑ Recommend site-specific **water quality objectives** (WQOs) for key parameters for the:
 - Bow River mainstem
 - Nose Creek and West Nose Creek mainstems
 - Elbow River mainstem from Glenmore Dam upstream
- ❑ Recommend an **action plan** (including both regulatory and non-regulatory tools such as policy changes, best management practices, identification of monitoring strategies and future research priorities, etc.) and an **implementation plan** (including performance monitoring requirements, accountabilities for each identified action, timelines and priorities for implementation) to help meet the desired outcomes and the recommended WQO thresholds and targets.

❑ Water Quality Objective (WQO): Numerical concentration limit or narrative statement which has been established to support and protect a designated water use at a specific site. (CCME 1996)

Who is leading the Bow Basin Watershed Management Plan?

The Bow River Basin Council is leading the development of the Bow Basin Watershed Management Plan. In December 2004, the Bow River Basin Council was officially recognized by the Provincial Government as the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for the Bow Basin.

What are the proposed next steps?

- ❑ September 2006 Onward – Commence Initial Stages of Plan Development
- ❑ September 2006 to March 2007 – Soliciting Support of Plan Direction from Municipalities and Key Agencies (Ongoing)
- ❑ March 2007 – BRBC Board of Directors Announce Release of Final Terms of Reference
- ❑ June 2007 – Complete First Draft Bow Basin Watershed Management Plan
- ❑ June to September 2007 – Review of First Draft
- ❑ September 2007 – Complete Revised Draft Bow Basin Watershed Management Plan
- ❑ November 2007 – Finalize Bow Basin Watershed Management Plan
- ❑ December 2007 – Formation of Implementation Committee

What is the current status of the project?

Working under the overall guidance of the BRBC Board of Directors, a Steering Committee and Technical Committee were established to help move the process forward. The Steering Committee is currently in the process of finalizing the draft BBWMP Terms of Reference and ensuring that key stakeholders and agencies have been involved in the development of the Terms of Reference. The Technical Committee is working in parallel to develop draft outcomes, indicators and recommendations for the Bow mainstem from Upper Bearspaw to Carseland Weir. This first section of the Bow River was chosen as the “pilot reach” prior to proceeding to the rest of the reaches. Work has now commenced on the second reach for the Elbow River from Glenmore Dam to upstream Bragg Creek.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, please visit the BBWMP website (located on the BRBC website at www.brbc.ab.ca) or contact Gloria Wilkinson (BBWMP Steering Committee Chair) at 246-3916, Chris Vermeeren (BBWMP Steering Committee Vice Chair) at 362-3852 or Mark Bennett (BRBC Executive Director) at 254-3353. Comments on any aspect of the planning process are welcome at any time.