

Agenda
Friday May 27, 2022
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Beaverlodge, AB

Agenda Item		Member
10:00 am	1.0 Welcome & Housekeeping	Host Elected Official
	1.1 Roundtable Introduction	WNC Members
10:15 am	2.0 Review of Agenda & Adoption of Previous Minutes	Chair
	2.1 October 8, 2021 Fall Meeting Minutes	
10:30 am	3.0 Updates	
	3.1 Strategic Plan Review and Adoption	Leadership Committee
	3.2 Alberta Environment and Parks (Water Act Update)	AEP
	3.3 Updates from Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committee (CAC)	CAC Member
12:00 pm	Lunch	
1:00 pm	4.0 Speakers	
	4.1 WNC Website Walk Through	Aquatera
1:30 pm	5.0 Election of Vice Chair	Chair
1:45 pm	6.0 Member Roundtable	Chair
2:00 pm	7.0 Wrap up and next meeting	Chair

**Agenda is subject to change*

**Water North Coalition (WNC) – Minutes
October 8, 2021
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting**

Attendees

Advanced Technology Applications (ATAP) – Grant Dixon
Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) – Tom Burton
Alberta Environment and Parks – Okey Obiajulu & Christine Donovan
Alberta Water & Wastewater Operators Association – Dan Rites
Aquatera – Sarah Ball & Tamara Wuttunee-Campbell
Athabasca Watershed Council – Petra Rowell
City of Cold Lake – Bob Buckle
County of Grande Prairie – Bob Marshall
M.D. of Greenview – Shawn Acton
Mackenzie County – Len Racher, Eric Jorgensen & John Zacharias
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo – Kwaku Agyare-Manu
Saddle Hills County – Willis Fitzsimmons
Town of Grimshaw – Colleen Sklapsky
Town of High Level – Keith Straub
Town of Peace River – Randy Duplis
Village of Rycroft – Diahann Potrebenko

Administration

Megan Beson, Legislative Services Officer – County of Grande Prairie

Welcome and Roundtable Introduction and Information Sharing

Chair Bob Marshall called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. and confirmed attendees.

The following roundtable updates were provided:

- City of Cold Lake – Bob Buckle: Meeting with Minister Nixon regarding Inner-Basin Water Transfer. Provincial position on approvals is dependent on scope, capacity and impact.
- Town of High Level – Keith Straub: MSP Program update. In negotiations with First Nations to partner on wastewater treatment facility.
- Alberta Water & Wastewater Operators Association – Dan Rites: Working with AEP to provide information on lead program, regulatory requirements for wastewater, source water protection regulations, and water diversion and transfer license in Alberta and will have a speaker for each one of these coming up for our conference in November.

Review and Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes and Agenda

Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Willis Fitzsimmons of Saddle Hills County to accept the agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Draft Minutes for Approval at May 27, 2022 Meeting

Adoption of Minutes of the June 30, 2021 Virtual Meeting

Moved by Colleen Sklapsky of the Town of Grimshaw that the minutes of the June 30, 2021 WNC Virtual Meeting be accepted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Updates – Alberta Health Services Bact T Sampling

The following updated was shared from Alberta Health Services regarding Bact T sampling sharing and accessibility of water quality results:

1. Alberta Health Services is working with Dr. Sylvia Checkley, University of Calgary to:
 - a. Identify existing data sharing systems and tools already used in Alberta for storing and disseminating water quality data. This includes drinking water, recreational water and pools.
 - b. Contact and interview key stakeholders to clearly understand their data needs, gaps in sharing data, the type and format of data needed.
 - c. Provide recommendations on how to implement data sharing with stakeholders (the data platform, data format).
2. The Water North Coalition is on the list of key stakeholders, so Sylvia will be contacting the WNC this fall/winter to review and document recommendations on what data could be accessed.

The project will help AHS identify the options to enhance access to water quality information.

There was discussion from the membership regarding current issues being experienced including accessing data and timeliness of results, and timeliness of communication with municipalities when re-sampling is required. Once the WNC has been contacted by Sr. Sylvia Checkley, WNC will draft a letter to the membership.

Drinking Water and Wastewater Prosecutions Presentation: Craig Kallal

Craig Kallal, Environmental Prosecutor for Alberta Crown Prosecution Service, provided a presentation on Drinking Water and Wastewater Prosecutions that included tips for management of operators to ensure that municipalities do not have to see a prosecutor.

A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes for the membership to review.

Updates – Alberta Environment and Parks

Okey Obiajulu and Christine Donovan provided an update from AEP. A map showing the boundaries of the five divisions can be found at:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=3fa1cc37da014982847ef5d1a710f61a>

The Boreal Region covers 60% of Alberta and has the largest landmass while the Capital District in the Southern part of the province has the larger population. Most members of the WNC will fall within the Boreal Region. Boreal is a consolidation of 3 districts. From an operational perspective the Boreal Region has one approval team and two compliance teams (one in the Northwest and one in the Northeast). AEP has tried to streamline the process so that stakeholders will find it easier to engage the department and receive approvals.

Draft Minutes for Approval at May 27, 2022 Meeting

Changes have recently been made to digitize the approvals process and all water approval processes have been transitioned into the digital system. It allows stakeholders to follow an application's process online before it is approved.

Changes to the CE requirements includes increases for small systems (to 1.8) and changes safety requirements needed for levels 1 through 4 to better align with other provinces across Canada. There are 9 exam locations across the province and AEP is currently working on securing a location for the Grande Prairie Area. The cost to re-new is new for some operator's this year (\$130), however if the application to re-new is not submitted within the proper timeframe it will increase to \$130 per discipline. The current turn-around time is 7 days to have operator's certified and approved for renewal if everything is in place.

Updates – Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committee (CAC)

Updates from the CAC were covered by Christine Donovan from AEP. The next CAC Meeting will be on October 27th in Edmonton. No additional updates were provided.

Strategic Plan Priority Updates

The Leadership Committee will be meeting later this fall to review the Strategic Plan and Priorities and update based on the recommendations from WNC members at the June 30, 2021 WNC Meeting. The updated Strategic Plan and Priorities will be brought forward for review by the membership at the WNC Spring Meeting.

Two priorities have been addressed at this meeting including the Bact T Sampling and Inner Basin Transfers.

If any members wish to put their name forward for the Leadership Committee please reach out the Chair, Bob Marshall.

Website and Facebook Walk-Through

Aquatera provided a walk-through of the website and facebook for WNC. Aquatera has taken over the WNC social media and website with objectives to promote key messages, events and initiatives that aligned to WNC, sharing information on water and wastewater regulations, and engaging collaboratively with the membership. If any municipalities have anything they would like to share on either of these platforms email communications@aquatera.ca to have it included. The website hosted by Aquatera is now live and available at <https://www.aquatera.ca/transparency-growth/water-north-coalition>

Next Meeting Date

If there is no host for the next meeting it will be held virtually. The next meeting date will be determined by the Leadership Committee following the municipal election and sent out to the membership.

Adjournment

Moved by Eric Jorgensen of Mackenzie County that the meeting be adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED



Water North Coalition

Revised January 2022

Introduction

The Water North Coalition (WNC) was formed in 2014 to build upon work completed through the Closer to Home (C2H) Alberta Water and Wastewater Operators Association (AWWOWA) initiative and to create a forum to address the water and wastewater challenges facing northern communities.

Voting membership is open to all northern municipalities, First Nations and Métis Settlements. Non-voting membership is open to water and wastewater commissions and professionals, provincial and federal governments, rural water and wastewater co-operatives, and owners and operators. Strategic advice and administrative support are provided by the County of Grande Prairie and WNC Leadership Committee.²

The WNC Leadership Committee has updated the Strategic Plan in 2022 to reflect changes within the new strategic document. The *Water North Coalition Strategic Plan 2018–2021* was developed by both voting and non-voting members. It builds on the findings of the 2016-2018 Strategic Plan, a 2018 WNC Opportunities & Challenges Survey, and focuses on three priority areas as defined by the membership: Advocacy; Public and WNC Members Education and Awareness; and Career Development and Training.

Opportunities that respondents identified include operator training and development, water line extensions, collaboration with First Nations, distribution and protection plans, and sewer service to outlying areas.

The challenges that respondents identified in the 2018 survey include costs associated with providing potable water in rural areas and changing government regulations, aging infrastructure, and environmental threats (untreated storm water, metals in groundwater, and the health of wetlands).

Emergent challenges are brought forward through regular meetings by the membership and prioritized by the WNC membership as to any action required.

The Plan

The mission, vision and guiding principles were developed by members when the WNC was first formed. They were reviewed and revised or affirmed for the 2022-2024 updated strategic plan.

Mission

To find and implement northern solutions to water sourcing and water challenges through the following priorities:

- Advocacy
- Public and WNC Members Education and Awareness
- Career Development and Training

Some of these priorities are within the sole jurisdiction of the water and wastewater systems owners, while others require collaboration with other levels of government. For example, the day-to-day operations of water and wastewater facilities are the responsibility of the owners, while public education about our water resources is often shared by all three levels of government in addition to the owners.

Vision

The WNC seeks to ensure that sustainable water and wastewater systems are available to every northern community.

Guiding Principles

The WNC will:

- Share information on water and wastewater regulations and responsibilities.
- Work collaboratively with members and partners.
- Identify emergent needs and opportunities.
- Advocate for northern solutions and funding for water and wastewater systems.

Priorities

The WNC will focus its attention on the following three organizational priorities over the next three years.

Priority #1: Advocacy

As summarized in its guiding principles, the WNC will advocate for northern solutions to water and wastewater problems.

How will we advocate?

1.0 Increase awareness of northern water & wastewater issues.

Actions:


- Engage various stakeholders to share their concerns with the WNC.
- Prioritize concerns and develop an advocacy strategy to address them.
 - Engage more indigenous groups.
 - WNC Chair or representative attend events.
 - Educate local MLA's.
 - Meet with Ministers or other government officials.
 - Collaborate with other groups as identified by the membership.
- Invite Provincial and Federal governments to WNC meeting to present on issues.
- Advocate for more transparent industry standards, guidelines, and legislation in order to ensure provision of uncontaminated water.
- To continuously encourage participation and recruitment of members including municipalities, First Nations, Metis, Water Co-ops, and any other related organizations or industry.

1.1 Funding

1.1.1 Pursue more funding for northern water and wastewater systems, including those found in hamlets, towns and rural northern communities.

Actions:

- Research potential funders and their priorities, including those of governments and industry groups.
- Raise the profile of the WNC at events like those held by the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA), the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA), and industry forums.

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- Develop strategies to advocate for reliable funding that can be used when submitting funding requests to the provincial and federal governments.
 - Reflect the real costs of operating water and wastewater systems in the north
 - Continue to advocate for predictable and sustainable funding for water and wastewater systems and operator professional development (e.g., Watersheds, Water for Life, and the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)).

1.2 Governance

1.2.1 Advocate for more municipal participation in federal and provincial reviews of legislation, regulations, and standards related to water and wastewater policies.

Actions:

- Engage with AUMA, RMA, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) on lobbying activities.
- Keep updated about developments at other levels of government and, in turn, keep other levels of government updated about issues and priorities related to northern water and wastewater.
- Maintain active representation in the Certification and Advisory Committee (CAC).

Priority #2: Public and WNC Members Education & Awareness

How will we educate members and the public?

2.1 Establish partnerships with agencies involved in water quality management and stewardship to support regional activities and help disseminate information for WNC members to relay to the public (*Ex: Watershed planning and advisory committees/councils, local stewardship groups, members, and system owners*).

2.2 Advocate for stronger communication and information availability on standards, guidelines, and practices by industry in relation to the source water protection plans and/or integrated watershed management plans.

Actions:

- Invite industry leaders and organizations to WNC meetings to engage in constructive dialogue.

2.3 Communicate the potential impacts to the actual cost of water and wastewater services.

Actions:

- Gather and communicate to the membership resources and information relevant to potential impacts to water and wastewater services.
- Resources examples include flushing medications down toilets, improper care of septic systems, improper disposal of RV wastewater, driving ATVs through muskeg, cutting down trees, leaks, running water needlessly (ex: brushing teeth), etc.



Priority #3: Career Development and Training

Career Development:

3.0 Promote the water/wastewater career opportunities and attract local operators.

Actions:

- Develop a resource pool for water and wastewater career opportunities.
- Communicate with WNC members to highlight opportunities within the career, networking, and ongoing training, etc.
- Participate in trade shows, career fairs, facility tours, and competitions aimed at encouraging students to consider careers as water and wastewater operators.
- Encourage more women to become water and wastewater operators.
- Take steps to attract local residents – those with roots in the community – and encourage high school students to become water and wastewater operators and promote local facility tours.

3.1 Share Resources

Small communities may only need part-time water and wastewater operators; agreements could be reached to share staff across communities.

Actions:

- Promote the exchange of our shared service agreement for members to use and help protect against liability.

Training:

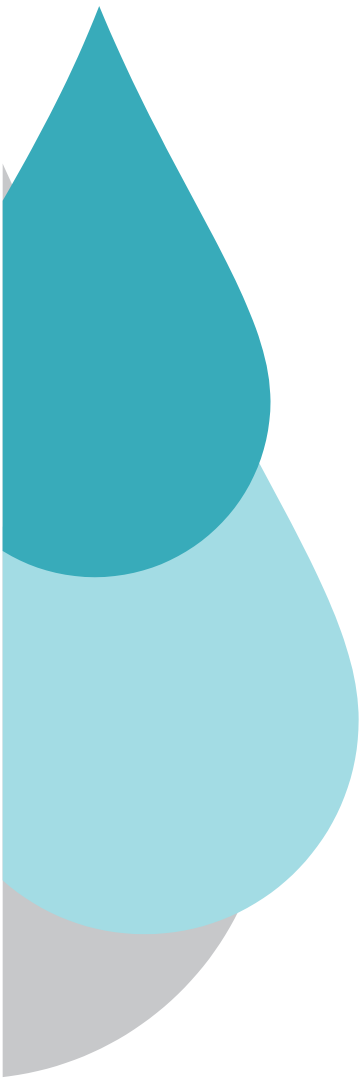
3.2 Provide information on affordable regional training and work experience opportunities for learners in the north.

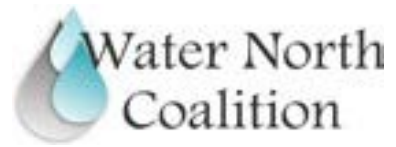
Actions:

- Provide available information regarding resources for training and potential funding.
- Advocate for improved training and work experience opportunities in the north.
- Engage with all levels of government regarding a commitment to supporting collaboration with First Nations & Metis Settlements as per ICF requirements for training.
- Encourage WNC members to promote operator conferences to facilitate networking, and promote new ideas, modern technology, and consistent messaging around current best practices.

Next Steps

The WNC will continue to work with members to strive to achieve these outcomes.





2022 – 2024 Strategic Plan Actions

Reporting Period: January – May 2022



WNC Strategic Priorities

Water North Coalition 2022 – 2024 Strategic Plan

The WNC sets its direction and priorities for the Coalition with a strategic plan consisting of three key priorities. The Strategic Plan is based on input from WNC Members.

Water North Coalition Action Plan

The WNC Action plan is the Coalition's commitment to its members. It is a plan containing actions and initiatives that will progress and deliver on key outcomes in the Strategic Plan. These actions and initiatives are planned and delivered by the Leadership Committee.

Water North Coalition Strategic Priorities

The WNC strives to find and implement northern solutions to water sourcing and water challenges through the following priorities:

- Advocacy
- Public and WNC Members Education and Awareness
- Career Development and Training

Priority #1: Advocacy

As summarized in its guiding principles, the WNC will advocate for northern solutions to water and wastewater problems.



Key Outcomes

1.0 Increase awareness of northern water and wastewater issues.

Set by WNC Members	Delivered by Leadership Committee		
What We Are Striving For:	Actions We Will Take	Timeline	Comments [Status]
Engage Various Stakeholders to share their concerns with WNC.			
Prioritize concerns and develop an advocacy strategy to address them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage more indigenous groups.WNC Chair or representative attend events.Educate local MLA's.Meet with Ministers or other government officials.Collaborate with other groups as identified by the membership.		
Invite Provincial and Federal governments to present on issues.			
Advocate for more transparent industry standards, guidelines, and legislation in order to ensure provision of uncontaminated water.			
To continuously encourage participation and recruitment of members including municipalities, First Nations, Metis, Water Co-ops, and any other related organizations or industry.			

Priority #1: Advocacy

As summarized in its guiding principles, the WNC will advocate for northern solutions to water and wastewater problems.



Key Outcomes

1.1 Funding – Pursue more funding for northern water and wastewater systems, including those found in hamlets, towns and rural northern communities.

Set by WNC Members	Delivered by Leadership Committee		
What We Are Striving For:	Actions We Will Take	Timeline	Comments [Status]
Research Potential funders and their priorities, including those of governments and industry groups.			
Raise the profile of the WNC at events like those held by the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA), the Alberta Municipalities, and industry forums.			
Develop strategies to advocate for reliable funding that can be used when submitting funding requests to the provincial and federal governments.			
Reflect the real cost of operating water and wastewater systems in the north.			
Continue to advocate for predictable and sustainable funding for water and wastewater systems and operator professional development (e.g. Watersheds, Water for Life, and the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)).			

Priority #1: Advocacy

As summarized in its guiding principles, the WNC will advocate for northern solutions to water and wastewater problems.



Key Outcomes

1.1 Governance – Advocate for more municipal participation in federal and provincial reviews of legislation, regulations, and standards related to water and wastewater policies.

Set by WNC Members	Delivered by Leadership Committee		
What We Are Striving For:	Actions We Will Take	Timeline	Comments [Status]
Engage with Alberta Municipalities, RMA and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) on lobbying activities.			
Keep updated about developments at other levels of government and, in turn, keep other levels of government updated about issues and priorities related to northern water and wastewater.			
Maintain active representation in the Certification and Advisory Committee (CAC).			

Priority #2: Public and WNC Members Education & Awareness

How will we educate members of the public?



Key Outcomes

2.1 Establish partnerships with agencies involved in water quality management and stewardship to support regional activities and help disseminate information for WNC members to relay to the public (Ex: Watershed planning and advisory committees/councils, local stewardship groups, members, and system owners).

Set by WNC Members	Delivered by Leadership Committee		
What We Are Striving For:	Actions We Will Take	Timeline	Comments [Status]

Key Outcomes

2.2 Advocate for stronger communication and information availability on standards, guidelines, and practices by industry in relation to the source water protection plans and /or integrated watershed management plans.

Set by WNC Members	Delivered by Leadership Committee		
What We Are Striving For:	Actions We Will Take	Timeline	Comments [Status]
Engage in constructive dialogue with industry leaders and organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite industry leaders and organizations to WNC meetings. 		

Priority #2: Public and WNC Members Education & Awareness

How will we educate members of the public?



Key Outcomes

2.3 Communicate the potential impacts to the actual cost of water and wastewater services.

Set by WNC Members	Delivered by Leadership Committee		
What We Are Striving For:	Actions We Will Take	Timeline	Comments [Status]
Gather and communicate to the membership resources and information relevant to potential impacts to water and wastewater services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Resources examples include flushing medications down toilets, improper care of septic systems, improper disposal of RV wastewater, driving ATVs through muskeg, cutting down trees, leaks, running water needlessly (ex: brushing teeth).		

Priority #3: Career Development and Training

Career Development and Training



Key Outcomes

3.0 Promote the water/wastewater career opportunities and attract local operators.

Set by WNC Members	Delivered by Leadership Committee		
What We Are Striving For:	Actions We Will Take	Timeline	Comments [Status]
Develop a resource pool for water and wastewater career opportunities.			
Communicate with WNC members to highlight opportunities within the career, networking, and ongoing training, etc.			
Participate in trade shows, career fairs, facility tours, and competitions aimed at encouraging students to consider careers as water and wastewater operators.			
Encourage more women to become water and wastewater operators.			
Take steps to attract local residents those with roots in the community – and encourage high school students to become water and wastewater operators and promote local facility tours.			

Priority #3: Career Development and Training

Career Development and Training



Key Outcomes

3.1 Share Resources. Small communities may only need part-time water and wastewater operators; agreements could be reached to share staff across communities.

Set by WNC Members	Delivered by Leadership Committee		
What We Are Striving For:	Actions We Will Take	Timeline	Comments [Status]
Promote the exchange of our shared service agreement for members to use and help protect against liability.			

Priority #3: Career Development and Training

Career Development and Training



Key Outcomes

3.2 Provide information on affordable regional training and work experience opportunities for learners in the north.

Set by WNC Members | Delivered by Leadership Committee

What We Are Striving For:	Actions We Will Take	Timeline	Comments [Status]
<p>Provide available information regarding resources for training and potential funding.</p> <p>Advocate for improved training and work experience opportunities in the north.</p> <p>Engage with all levels of government regarding commitment to supporting collaboration with First Nations & Metis Settlements as per ICF requirements for training.</p> <p>Encourage WNC members to promote operator conferences to facilitate networking, and promote new ideas, modern technology, and consistent messaging around current best practices.</p>			