

A Water Strategy for Canada: Our Collective National Imperative

Canada's precious water, *the source of all life*, must be restored, protected and preserved now, for all Canadians, and as a trust for all future generations. Why?

- ❖ Secure access to safe healthy water is essential, yet some Canadians, especially in remote communities; do not have the clean water they need.
- ❖ Risks to water quality and quantity at local, regional, national, and transnational scale threaten vital ecosystems.
- ❖ Climate change adds new challenges to those already posed by contamination and escalating water demand.
- ❖ Fiscal responsibility requires carefully-planned, coordinated action; each year billions of dollars are spent on water management in Canada.
- ❖ The responsibilities for managing our water are spread across many agencies and jurisdictions leading to conflict, overlap, and gaps in key areas of policy.

We need a strategy that is comprehensive and integrative, one which provides effective and efficient guiding principles, and priority actions, to protect water for all purposes for all generations.

The CWRA is working in a leadership role with other water management groups to initiate the development of a Water Strategy for Canada. A Canada-wide strategy for water is the key that unlocks the door to effective and efficient management.

Taking account of the vast array of interests and jurisdictions involved in water management, the CWRA established a Canadian National Water Strategy Working Group to evaluate management options and recommend an appropriate mechanism to produce a Water Strategy for Canada. The working group commissioned a study by Dr. Rob de Loë. His 2008 report, "*Towards the Development of a National Water Strategy*" underscores the need for a fully collaborative approach to assure success. Only through the full collaborative engagement of all water stewards can Canadians develop the comprehensive, integrated strategy needed to resolve the complex issues of management.

In response to this recommendation, CWRA has begun working with other leadership groups to develop a collaborative framework within which our long-awaited, and much needed National Water Strategy can be developed. We visualize a start-up process that extends over approximately two years. It will engage leaders at the national, provincial, territorial and local levels and leaders from the First Nations and aboriginal peoples. It will include water stewards from all sectors and at all levels, and incorporate vigorous public participation in its development.

The end product will be a self-renewing strategy with an agreed Canada-wide vision for water. It will contain specific short-term goals for dealing with a restricted set of top-priority concerns, acceptance of responsibility by each participant for taking actions that fall within their sphere of influence, and a commitment to monitor progress and adjust the strategy at regular intervals.

The Rob de Loë report and related material can be downloaded from this website.
http://www.cwra.org/Resource/assets/CNWS_Report_Final_2008_06_18.pdf

Institute for research on public policy (IRPP) - article written by Rob's Loë to
<http://www.irpp.org/Po>

Then click on the link to the list of previously published numbers and select the number of July-August

To find out more about how you and your organization can become involved in the process of developing a Water Strategy for Canada please contact:

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