

## Bow River Phosphorus Management Plan

The Bow River Phosphorus Management Plan is a collaborative planning effort to understand the sources of phosphorus entering the Bow River, sponsored by Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. The goal of this initiative is to identify strategies and actions to improve water quality by reducing phosphorus loading into the Bow River (Bearsaw Dam to upstream of the Bassano Dam). It is considered a pilot project of the water quality management frameworks approach that will be developed under each of the seven Land-use Framework regional plans.

A number of AEPA members sit on the Rural Non-Point Source Task Team of this initiative. The Task Team has recently identified run-off from snow melt and rain to be the over-arching phosphorus threat to water quality and therefore is the keystone consideration in developing mitigation strategies. Threats identified in descending order of risk are:

1. Loss of wetlands
2. Degradation of riparian areas
3. Linear features (roads, cut lines, right of ways, etc)
4. Poor rural residential horse/grazing land management and septic systems
5. Poor management of manure (biosolids from waste water treatment applied to land will likely be sub-set threat)
6. Recreational Use
7. Run-off from confined feeding operations
8. Poor location of livestock feeding
9. Poor grazing management practices
10. Irrigation management (return flows)
11. Wildfire
12. Poor chemical fertilizer management
13. Erosion from cultivated lands

The Task Team has developed a template to outline risks, mitigation strategies, the inventorying of existing mitigation programs and the identification of strategy gaps. Several sub teams have been struck to populate the templates, which should be completed for review sometime in May and will be circulated to stakeholders for scrutiny and feedback. Once that has been completed, recommendations will be made to the initiative's Steering Committee for inclusion into the Bow River Phosphorus Management Plan.

For more information on this initiative, please contact:

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## On Common Ground: Messages from the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta

### Intensive Livestock Working Group: Background

Submitted by the Intensive Livestock Working Group

The Intensive Livestock Working Group (ILWG) is a strategic alliance of eight of Alberta's mainstream livestock and poultry organizations, consisting of the following:

- Alberta Beef Producers
- Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association
- Alberta Chicken Producers
- Alberta Hatching Egg Marketing Board
- Alberta Milk
- Alberta Pork Producers
- Alberta Turkey Producers
- Egg Farmers of Alberta

The ILWG mandate is collaborate on overarching issues to maximize the livestock/poultry industry's influence on policy development and get the most value out of scarce resources. The organization normally meets four times a year with each member organization acting as host on a rotational basis.

### OBJECTIVES

- The ILWG be an effective body who can contribute to public policy in a meaningful way.  
*The ILWG mandate is not to represent the livestock/poultry industry. Where it has proven to be effective is identifying emerging issues and developing a strong, common information base to assist member organizations develop policy. This process improves knowledge, understanding and results in policy continuity amongst the eight member organizations, thereby increasing the industry's influence on GOA policy development*
- The ILWG members proactively address (be less reactionary) emerging issues.  
*The ILWG has established effective communication networks with key GOA executives (DM's, ADM's & Directors) and uses the network to constantly scan for emerging issues. Once an issue has been identified a process of information collection and knowledge improvement begins to assist member organizations develop positions and influence policy.*
- Policy issues will be identified, projects developed and resources employed to deal with the issues in meaningful and time sensitive manner. Analysis and risk management studies will bring focus to those issues that are priorities and thus use fewer resources on issues that may have no or minimal effect on the livestock industry.  
*The ILWG recognizes it has limited resources and to be effective must restrict its activities to dealing with high priority issues. A thorough assessment of current and emerging issues resulted in a three year plan of action that was purposely limited to five priority areas:*
  - *Water rights and allocation policies*
  - *Livestock/poultry operations impacts on water quality*
  - *Ambient water/air quality frameworks (mandated through regional plans)*
  - *Cumulative effects strategies*
  - *Occupational Health and Safety*

- Through coordination of meetings and related correspondence the meetings promote efficiency and use fewer resources by providing clarity and by being results orientated.

*Meetings are convened on a quarterly basis and agenda topics limited to preset priority issues and any emerging concerns (identified through the implementation of its issue scanning process). A concise information package is circulated two weeks prior to the meeting. The development of action items (both ongoing and new) is part of the meeting summary process, which in turn drives the work plan between meetings.*

*Monthly reports are circulated to member organizations to incrementally build a common information base and improve issue knowledge, which in turn facilitates collaboration and a shared approach to policy development.*

- ILWG thoroughly evaluates its effectiveness tri-annually, which coincides with funding agreements. *The value of the ILWG to the industry has been demonstrated by member organizations extending the ILWG mandate in 2012 for another 3 years and stepping up to the plate with a significant year cash contribution to augment new funding from the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency.*

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## On Common Ground: Messages from the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta

### Crop Sector Working Group: Backgrounder

*Submitted by the Crop Sector Working Group*

The Crop Sector Working Group (CSWG) is an inclusive partnership of Alberta crop industry organizations that have come together to address environmental issues as they affect the crop sector. Our member organizations include:

- Alberta Wheat Commission
- Alberta Canola Producers Commission
- Alberta Pulse Growers Commission
- Alberta Barley Commission
- Alberta Oat, Rye and Triticale Association
- Alberta Potato Growers
- Alberta Sugar Beet Growers
- Alberta Oat Growers Commission

In response to increasing numbers of requests to provide input and representation on environmental initiatives in the province, the CSWG was formed in 2008 with funding from the Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund (ACIDF) and the canola, pulse and barley commissions. The three year contract with ACIDF was renewed in 2012 for a further three years with the new Alberta Wheat Commission contributing funds as well.

The vision of the CSWG is: *The Alberta Crop Sector will produce safe, high quality food, fuel and fibre ingredients competitively in an environmentally sustainable manner.*

The mission of the CSWG is: *To build a forum for discussion of common areas of environmental policy and to develop specific key messages on behalf of the crop sector to be delivered to specific target audiences.*

The CSWG meets twice a year to review objectives, strategies and progress on issues and to identify evolving issues. The groups also remain in contact via e-mail and phone calls as needed. Key issues for focus in 2013 are:

- Ecosystem Services
- Land-use Framework
- Sustainable Agriculture (Environmental Footprinting)
- Disposal of grain bags / agricultural plastics
- Growing Forward 2

We are actively engaged in policy discussions in Alberta working with other farm groups, governments, industry, and non-government organizations on these and other issues of concern to the crop sector. The CSWG, while not a partner of the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta (AEPA) works closely with AEPA staff and partners on various committees and on the Land-use Framework and Water Advisory Teams.

The CSWG is a member of the Alberta Water Council (AWC) and is part of two project teams – Non-point Source Pollution (NPSP) and Riparian Land Conservation and Management. The NPSP team finalized its

report earlier this year with five recommendations; the report will be released soon. The Riparian Project draft report is nearing completion and will be sent out for stakeholder engagement this summer.

We are an active participant on the Bow River Phosphorus Management Plan Steering Committee and the Rural non-point source team looking at actions to manage and reduce phosphorus in the Bow River. Phosphorus pollution from the cropping activities is not a major risk, however, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, which is leading the plan development, expects all contributing sectors to carry out actions to reduce phosphorus risk.

For the crop sector, pesticide residue in water is a bigger issue and the CSWG is looking at ways to address it, potentially through Growing Forward 2. Agricultural plastics are being used increasingly and disposal of the plastic is a problem with few recycling facilities and burning and burying in landfills an environmental concern. The CSWG is working with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development on cost effective solutions.

The identification of issues of concern to the crop sector, providing a common information base and bringing the crop sector voice to policy discussions are central to the CSWG and enable us to participate fully in agri-environmental policy development in Alberta.

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