

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 (Bears paw 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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